SRI AUROBINDOS HUTEGRAL YOGA

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SRI AUROBINDO'S INTEGRAL YOGA

TULSIDAS CHATTERJEE

With a Foreword by DR. S. K. MAITRA, M.A., PH. D.

First Edition—1961 Second Edition (Enlarged)—1970

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SRI AUROBINDO THE DIVINE MASTER

To

the Lotus Feet of the Divine Mother at Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry, this small book is offered in deep devotion and homage.

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FOREWORD

The book before us is perhaps the most comprehensive work that has so far been written on the subject of Sri Aurobindo's Yoga. It is divided into twenty-two chapters, each chapter dealing with some aspect of this Yoga, the chapters being so arranged as to give a complete view of Sri Aurobindo's Yoga. As is well known, Sri Aurobindo's Yoga has synthesized the different Yogas that are current in our country, the Yoga of Patanjali, the Tantrika Yoga, Hatha Yoga, the Yoga of Mahayana Buddhism, etc., into one all-comprehensive Yoga, which, while preserving the most essential elements of each of these Yogas, has not laid exclusive stress upon any one of them, and which, besides, has a very definite standpoint of its own. This is one reason why it is called Purna Yoga. The other reason is that it envisages the transformation of the whole of our being, including the lowest parts of it, namely, the vital and the physical, and not merely the upper parts. With Mahayana Buddhism, Sri Aurobindo has stressed cosmic salvation. But his idea of cosmic is even more comprehensive than that of Mahayana Buddhism, for it envisages not only the salvation of the whole of mankind but also of the entire universe, including the physical universe. Moreover, salvation

for Sri Aurobindo connotes something very different from what it does in Mahayana Buddhism. It does not mean attainment of Nirvana, as the latter views it. For although Nirvana is not a negative conception with Mahayana Buddhism, yet it is not looked upon either as cit or as bliss. But in Sri Aurobindo's view, salvation is the attainment of the Divine status, which means possession of perfect cit and perfect bliss, with full retention of individuality. Again, while stressing, with the Trantzikas, the need of kindling the inner being, Sri Aurobindo has not 'laid exclusive stress upon it, but has shown that it must be supplemented by the light that descends from the spiritual and supramental sources. From the Gita he has accepted the idea of descent, but he has generalized it and made it the central idea of his theory of evolution. The descent as Avatara, of which the Gita speaks, is a very special descent for a specific purpose, namely, to cut the Gordian Knot, when a crisis in human evolution occurs (called dharmasya glanih in the Gita), and let evolution proceed in its normal way. But there also, as Sri Aurobindo points out, the main significance of the descent lies not so much in this as in the ocular demonstration which it gives that human beings are also capable of being divine. The generalized concept of descent which Sri Aurobindo derives from the Gita's conception of Avatara is that every decisive step in the

onward march of evolution, from Matter to life, from Life to Mind, etc., is made possible only through a descent of the Divine. He has also taken from the Gita its idea of Yoga as union with the Divine, but this union, according to him, means the attainment of the Divine status, with full retention of individuality, and not any kind of merging (laya) in the Divine. As regards the equivalence of the different yogas, the yoga of Knowledge, the yoga of Action and the yoga of Devotion, which the Gita teaches, Sri Aurobindo substitutes for this equivalence the synthesis of these and other Yogas, giving us in this way his concept of Purna Yoga.

The author has dealt exhaustively with all these points which differentiate Sri Aurobindo's Yoga from all the previous Yogas current in our country, and has not only done so, but has also pointed out why it is necessary for Sri Aurobindo's Yoga not to follow too closely, any of the previous Yogas. For the most important thing to remember in connection with Sri Aurobindo's Yoga is that its goal is fundamentally different from that of all the previous yogas, for no previous yoga put it as the complete divinization not only of man but also of the entire univese.

Another very important idea in Sri Aurobindo's Yoga is that of transformation. This Yoga aims at a complete transformation of human personality, not merely the raising of any part of it to the Divine.

It does not reject any part, however low that part may be, but transforms it, and by such transformation, refines and ennobles it, so that it also eventually attains the Divine status. As I have already said, this is the second reason why Sri Aurobindo's Yoga is called Purna Yoga, for it aims at the complete integration of the whole of our personality. Here Sri Aurobindo's standpoint differs from that of Alexander, with which it has many things in common. For Alexander the higher consciousness only emerges by wiping the lower stages or by relegating them completely to the background. Sri Aurobindo, on the other hand, thinks it impossible for the higher stage to emerge without a corresponding improvement of the lower stages. point our author also has brought out very clearly, when he says, "Yoga, therefore, comes to mean a conscious and methodised effort for attaining to full divine perfection of the whole human personality."

Another question which is also very fully discussed in this work is: What is the relation between self-effort and Grace in Sri Aurobindo's Yoga? The author, quoting the Mother's view, says, "The Divine Grace is always there to help those who have resolved to correct themselves, and they cannot say, 'I' am too weak to correct myself.' They should rather, say that they have not yet taken the resolution to correct themselves." Self-effort therefore, is needed in the initial stage to put oneself in the way. But all further

progress in yoga is only possible through Divine Grace. As our author puts it, "To succeed in yoga one must not depend upon one's power only, but try and develop a contact with the Divine and an opening to the Mother's Power and Presence." "Realization comes not by one's own merit, virtue or capacity, but by the action of the Divine Grace. One must have the happy confidence that one's prayer will be granted, one's aspiration will be fulfilled and everything will be all right."

The reader will find the book of great help in understanding the nature of Sri Aurobindo's Yoga, as all the aspects of this Yoga have been exhaustively dealt with in it. And what lends special value to the book is that every statement that the author has made has been illustrated by a wealth of quotations from the works of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother.

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PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION

Volumes have been written by Sri Aurobindo and his sage followers about his Supramental Yoga otherwise called the Purna or Integral Yoga. These writings are profound, vast and varied, covering in their comprehensive sweep numerous abstruse truths and complex problems of Yoga and philosophy. But to go through them all is a difficult task for an ordinary reader having small leisure at his disposal. neophyte is at sea when he tries to find out essentials of the new Yoga set out within a brief compass. "A Practical Guide to Integral Yoga" published from the Pondicherry Ashram contains many valuable and interesting extracts from the writings of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. But the book does not meet the need of the aspirant for a succinct and connected account of the chief principles and methods of the Purna Yoga. This short treatise has been intended to remove this primary want of the beginner for a handbook for clear comprehension and systematic practice of the Integral Yoga. Lucid expositions of the fundamental yogic truths disciplines have been given here avoiding all nonessential or complex details. A brief outline of the philosophical background has also been attempted for

perception of the deeper and higher principles upon which the Yoga is founded. It is expected that the sadhak would find the book useful as a much needed guide along the difficult way of this Yoga of Synthesis, which includes yet exceeds all previous yogic systems.

Sri Aurobindo is a born master of language. His words are so precise, direct, convincing and compelling that it is difficult to abridge or alter his language in any manner. A synopsis however close and faithful tends to detract from the inspiring force and profound suggestiveness of the original. The writings of the Mother too cannot be recast without impairing their simplicity, lucidity, crispness and completeness of expression. To give a faithful exposition of their teachings, it has therefore been found necessary to make many citations from the writings of the two divine seers of the Truth. These extracts are intended to clarify the ideas, create conviction or support a contention. A transcription more or less close has also been resorted to whenever required for graphic and undeviating presentation of the precious truths contained in the originals. The latitude taken may be overpassed, as the book is designed to place before the general public the elements of a unique Yoga whose aim is the divinisation of the whole of our existence. It is needless to add that the work is entirely based upon the writings of the two Pioneers of the Purna Yoga. Our labour has been to weave a

garland for the readers out of the beautiful flowers—divine truths in rare garbs—blooming in the celestial garden of their inspired and inspiring compositions.

Brief explanatory notes on certain technical yogic terms employed in the book have been given in the Appendix. Most of them are taken from the Letters of the Master to his disciples. A reference to these notes may be helpful for grasping the proper import of the terms and hence for a better apprehension of the passages where they occur. Each technical term upon its first appearance in the book has been indicated by an obelisk (+) for the purpose of drawing to it the reader's special attention. The appendix also contains a brief account of the Chakras or yogic centres of consciousness and their function. A list of the works consulted together with their years of publication has been supplied in the Bibliography at the end of the book.

Acknowledgments are due to all those who have rendered any help to us in any manner in bringing out this humble manual of Sri Aurobindo's Supramental Yoga. Our grateful thanks are due to the Mother for her gracious permission to publish the book and to dedicate it to Her. We are also indebted to Sri Nalini Kanto Gupta, Secretary of the Ashram, who has helped greatly by giving some valuable advice and assistance. Thanks are particularly due to Dr. S. K. Maitra, well-known philosopher, author and commen-

tator, who has read the book in manuscript and blessed it with a Foreword. Lastly, we must express our gratitude to K. C. Pati, M. A., Prof. of Philosophy of Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education and Sri Manik Lal Mitra, Librarian of Sri Aurobindo Pathamandir of Calcutta. Both of them very kindly reviewed the book before its publication and offered useful suggestions for its improvement.

The Author

PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION

The book was first published in the year 1961 under the title, 'A Handbook of Sri Aurobindo's Yoga.' It is gratifying to find that a second edition was called for within a brief space of six years. The book has been thoroughly revised and enlarged in the present edition. The revision was undertaken for the purpose of throwing further lights upon certain fundamental ideas in the Yoga of Sri Aurobindo. Besides much additional matter has been introduced for a fuller treatment of the subject. Part II of the first chapter is expanded into an entire new chapter under the caption, 'A Yoga of Synthesis.' Three more chapters dealing with the Yogas of Knowledge, of Divine Love, of Self-perfection and a fourth entitled On Questions of Control are incorporated

for presenting a complete view of the Integral or Purna Yoga of Sri Aurobindo in all its aspects. Yet another chapter deals with the conquest of disease and death, which is a unique concept in the Purna Yoga. These supplements will be found useful for a better comprehension of the integral aim and the superior value of this new synthetic system. As the object now in view is a general survey of the whole Yoga of Sri Aurobindo which synthesises all existing systems as well as exceeds them by introduction of the novel idea of divinisation of nature, the title of the book is altered into Sri Aurobindo's Integral Yoga.

This edition is being published with the divine blessing and gracious permission of the Mother to whom I acknowledge once again my deep debt of gratitude. I should also express my gratefulness to my devoted ex-students who helped by contributing funds and rendering other useful services.

The entire sale proceeds of the book will be handed over to the Mother as offering by the ex-students of the author who have borne all costs of the publication.

Shibpur, Howrah: 15th August, 1970

The Author

THE CALL TO THE PATH

This is thy work and the aim of thy being and that for which thou art here, to become the divine superman and a perfect vessel of the Godhead.

To be the superman is to live the Divine Life, to be a god; for the gods are the powers of God. Be a power of God in humanity.

To live in the divine Being and let the consciousness and bliss, the will and knowledge of the Spirit possess thee and play with and through thee, this is the meaning.

This is the transfiguration of thyself on the mountain. It is to discover God as thyself and reveal him to thyself in all things. Live in his being, shine with his light, act with his power, rejoice with his bliss. Be that Fire and that Sun and that Ocean. Be that joy and that greatness and that beauty.

Sri Aurobindo

1

CHAPTER I

OBJECTS OF THE YOGA

Yoga is after all primarily a change of the inner consciousness and nature.

The object of the sadhana can only be to live in the divine consciousness and to manifest it in life.

Sri Aurobindo

We are not here to make our life easy and comfortable. We are here to find the Divine, to become the Divine, to manifest the Divine.

The goal is not to lose oneself in the Divine Consciousness. The goal is to let the Divine consciousness penetrate into Matter and transform it.

The Mother

What is Yoga? Yoga means union with the Divine, a joining of the limited human with the infinite divine consciousness. It is the ascent of man to a spiritual status by coming into contact or union with a deeper, higher and wider consciousness. Man living in the ignorance is not aware of his true self which is a portion of the Divine. By Yoga he becomes conscious of and united with the individual Self+ within himself, the Supreme Self above the cosmos and the universal

Self by which he unites with all being and becoming. What we have to do is to abolish the Ignorance, go inside and discover the soul and to become united in consciousness with God and with all existence. So Yoga implies a waking into a new self, a transition from our ordinary self into a greater Self beyond the Ignorance. It is the exchange of a false, narrow, egoistic for a true, wide, spiritual consciousness free from all sordid human limitations.

But the word 'yoga', with Sri Aurobindo, has a wider significance. According to him yoga means complete union in the soul as well as nature by a moulding of the entire being into an image of the Divine. Not a partial union in the inner existence alone, but an integral union in all elements of our being is the aim of the Yoga. This indicates a change of the inner and outer life so that it may become a channel of the joy and might of the Divine and a fit instrument of His works. All the elements of our personality-soul, mind, sense, heart, will, life and body-must fulfil themselves in a supreme perfection by their complete turning and self-giving to the Divine. The object is a total spiritual change so that the being by degrees may become ready to express the Divine in its every thought, feeling and action. "This Yoga", says Sri Aurobindo, "implies not only the realisation of God, but an entire consecration+ and change of the inner and outer life till it is fit to

manifest a divine consciousness and become part of a divine work."

Our life is a series of struggles to outgrow its ordinary limitations for rising to a higher status of existence. The true progress of life consists in an evolution from darkness to light, from sorrow to bliss, from weakness by limitation to the perfection of the Infinite. The ultimate aim is a progressive manifestation of the inner soul in the outer existence. The whole of our life in this sense is a yoga, a series of mental, vital or psychic movements towards full development of all our latent divine possibilities. The divine Power in us uses all experiences of life, whether inner or outer, as the means of this integral voga. "All life", says Sri Aurobindo, "is Yoga of nature seeking to manifest God within itself."2 The evolution going on in universal nature is also a yoga, because it is an effort, though tardy and unconscious, for revealing the spirit hidden within herself. Both man and Nature are evolving towards the same ultimate goal of perfect expression of the Divine in every sphere or plane of existence. But man need not follow the tardy method of cosmic evolution; he can hasten the slow natural process of his individual evolution by applying to it his own intelligence, will and endeavour. He can by his self-

^{1.} On Yoga, Tome One, p. 513

^{2.} The Synthesis of Yoga, p. 52

conscious effort quickly reach the goal of his existence which is a divine fulfilment of the inner and outer life.

The movements of evolution in humanity reveal the truth that its motive is the full development of all the parts of our personality. For Nature is leading forward in man a double evolution, one relating to his outward life and nature and the other to his occult inner being and nature. The latter is now at a preliminary stage, for only a few have evolved so far beyond the mental into the spiritual level. But the human mind has been for a long time past increasing in range, height and subtlety. Man's vital and physical parts too are pressing on for expression of their yet unknown powers and capacities. This shows that Nature intends a full growth of the entire being in all its parts, which must also be the aim of the Yoga. The Integral or Purna Yoga of Sri Aurobindo is therefore identical with the Nature's Yoga, because the ultimate aim of both is a divine perfection of the human being,

The object here is not merely an outward or mundane perfection of the normal human mind, life and body. Our aim is the full development of all members of the being, both inner and outer, for the greatest fulfilment of our embodied existence. We must not ignore the demands of the spirit on the one hand nor of the material nature on

the other for a balanced growth of our personality. For a perfect Yoga requires a perfect balance, a harmonious growth of all the parts. A more and more harmonised development of the inner selves and all the outer nature for a divine living is the highest object of human endeavour. Man by his constant self-exceeding must become "a liberated spirit and a perfected force," a divine man possessing a divine nature. This integral perfection is the highest ideal of man by following which he can attain his destiny of being a dynamic instrument for fulfilment of the divine purpose in the evolution. Yoga, therefore, comes to mean a conscious and methodised effort for attaining to full divine perfection of the whole human personality.

The term yoga also denotes identity with the Divine, because He is our Origin, our highest Self and the supreme Perfection. Our fulfilment lies in uniting ourselves with God who is the only true being, and participating in His perfect purity, peace, light, force and ananda. We should seek for perfection, because perfection is the nature of the Divine and the more we grow into His perfection, the more we feel Him manifest in our natural being. By turning our whole being to the Divine, we shall unite with the being, consciousness and delight of the Divine through every part of our human nature, which will be moulded into an image of the divine Nature. The outcome will be that we shall always feel the Divine Presence+ within

us and become a perfect channel for the expression of the Divine in the world. The whole meaning of the Integral Yoga is in fact a growth into the happy perfection of likeness to the Divine, which means a rendering of the human into the divine nature. Sri Aurobindo says, "A growth into a divine consciousness is the whole meaning of our Yoga, an integral conversion to divinity, not only of the soul but of all the parts of our nature."

The word 'yoga' is also used in a secondary sense. It means the specialised methods or practices for attaining the goal of divine realisation. Yoga is an instrument for effecting the transition from the ordinary human nature to the perfected divine nature. But yoga, though quicker than Nature, is yet a long and arduous process demanding constant effort, limitless patience and unflagging perseverance. The goal is distant, the journey difficult and falls frequent. The mind is assailed by doubt, disbelief and dejection. Naturally, the question arises, what is the necessity of yoga? To put it briefly, yoga is required for perfection and full delight of the being which is the highest object of human life.

The primary need of man is harmony among the discordant elements of his personality. A ceaseless fight is going on among them, each pressing for its own

^{1.} The Synthesis of Yoga, p. 103

delight and fulfilment in disregard of the total welfare of the whole being. For instance, the vital part runs after many low and self-seeking pleasures which the mind does not accept as the true enjoyment of life. Man thirsts for many objects and satisfactions which conflict with one another. He is constantly wavering between the right and the wrong; his nature contradicts what his soul regards as the true object of life. His knowledge, will and emotion show great disparity, which must be replaced by a divine harmony. The jarring elements must be harmonised by union or yoga with our inner Self who is the divine individual within us. That alone can bring peace, joy and harmony into the being.

Again life in the Ignorance brings sorrow, suffering, limitation, weakness and mortality. An inner divine urge compels man to seek for light, power, peace, perfection and delight of existence. The soul within has an inherent longing for God; it needs self-giving, love, devotion, union, which can only be fully satisfied by the Divine. The root cause of all evils of life is the separation of the finite being from its infinite Source which possesses all bliss and power and knowledge. The remedy lies in the re-union of the individual with the Divine, the origin of his being, master of his life and beloved of his heart. Yoga is the path that leads to such union and spiritual fulfilment of life.

Moreover, the Divine confers on us the rich treasures of his spirit as recompense for all our toil and trouble. He is the Giver of spiritual gifts that are infinitely more valuable than any material riches. Yoga gives us the delight of the Divine and the divine consciousness, which means the joy of Peace and Silence, of the inner Light, of growing inner Knowledge and Power, of Divine Love and Ananda, and numerous other spiritual experiences. Sri Aurobindo says, "By Yoga we can rise out of falsehood into truth, out of weakness into force, out of pain and grief into bliss, out bondage into freedom, out of death into immortality, out of darkness into light, out of confusion into purity, out of imperfection into perfection, out of self-division into unity, out of Maya⁺ into God." 1

What again is the object of the Yoga? The central object of the Yoga is union with the Divine; all other aims are only part of this one supreme fulfilment. Not personal power, liberation or perfection but integral union with the Divine is the object of the Yoga. Yoga should be done for the fulfilment of God's will in us, His manifestation in the world and not for a personal achievement.* We seek God not to

^{1.} The Hour of God, p. 41

^{* &}quot;The supramental Realisation is the Will of The Transcendent Divine which we have to work out."—On Yoga, Tome One, p. 554

attain an egoistic aim, but to serve Him, to manifest. Him in our lives and to carry out His will in the creation. A complete union with the Divine in consciousness, will, heart, life and body is the aim of our Yoga.

Sri Aurobindo says, "The object of the yoga is to enter into and be possessed by the Divine Presence and Consciousness, to love the Divine for the Divine's sake alone, to be turned in our nature into the nature of the Divine and in our will and works and life to be the instrument of the Divine." We must become one not only in our conscious essence but in the entire nature with the transcendent and universal Divine. For such integral union all parts of the being must feel, possess and express the divine presence within themselves in all possible manner. What is required is not merely inner experience, but a realisation of the Divine in the outer consciousness and life. The consummation lies in the change of the human consciousness and nature into the divine consciousness. and nature.

To attain the above objective, three yogic movements are necessary. First to live in the tranquil inner self instead of the restless outer nature for an opening to the Divine. One must by inner concentration awaken the inmost soul or the psychic being so-

^{1.} On Yoga II, Tome One, p. 477

that it may use its power to purify and change the ignorant nature and make it ready for divine union and spiritual transformation. Secondly, to develop the cosmic consciousness by which the yogi becomes conscious of his union with the universal Self and Nature. Thirdly, to come in contact with the Divine beyond the cosmos through the consciousness of the Supermind which is the ideal or divine mind in full possession of the truth.

The Supermind upon descending into the nature will begin a miraculous operation for a divine change of the human being. By opening to the action of the Supermind, the human consciousness will be changed into the divine and the ignorant nature into the supreme Supernature. The Supermind will change our mind, life and body for their complete conversion+ to divinity. This implies that the entire being will turn towards the Divine, live and act for Him and become full of the divine consciousness. All the elements will be recast into moulds of the divine consciousness growing ever more in peace, light, force, love, Ananda. The divinisation of the whole human personality is the ultimate aim of this yoga, which is therefore called the Purna or Integral Yoga.

The object of the Yoga is wide and all-embracing. That object is "the fulfilment of the divine humanity in ourselves and others." The first aim of this as of

other yogas is the soul's individual liberation and enjoyment of union with the Supracosmic Divine. This is necessary for the discovery of our true eternal self beyond all limitations of existence. But liberation. has also to be harmonised with cosmic action and enjoyment of union with the cosmic Divine. Man is not solely an individual but a cosmic being, part and parcel of the cosmos. Hence our second objective should be. oneness with the divine in all souls and all Nature. This oneness does not mean simply inmost spiritual unity but also union and participation in cosmic activity. To work for all in soul unity with all is. perhaps more important for realising oneness than the exclusive highest concentration. Such divine life-action is therefore not a casual motive as in other systems of yoga but a distinct and central object.

A third objective of the Yoga arises cut of the second as its sequel. The individual has to become in his natural being an instrument for the fulfilment of the divine purpose in the world. That purpose is manifestation of the Spirit in living Matter, the expression of God's glory and His reign upon earth. The yogi consciously co-operates with God for the creation of a new spiritual order among mankind, the advent of a new race of Supermen, 'the race of the Sons of God.' That is also the secret object of the spiritual evolution going on in nature. It is yoga of the divine Nature for the perfection of mankind as a whole. The Integral

Yoga like the Nature's Yoga is intended for the whole human race. The ultimate object of both is not merely individual realisation but the spiritual transformation of humanity. This far-reaching ideal was not envisaged by any previous system as a goal of our spiritual endeavour.

The most prominent feature of the Yoga is the transformation of the individual nature. By transformation Sri Aurobindo means a complete and radical spiritual change of the ignorant human personality. "It is a putting on of the spiritual consciousness, dynamic as well as static in every part of the being down subconscient." Transformation denotes a growing of the being into the divine consciousness and the divine nature. Not only the soul at the top but the parts below must be so changed as to have the same quality of consciousness and the same way of working as the Divine Consciousness. This implies an entire replecement of the lower by a higher consciousness by which the being becomes ready to manifest the Divine Truth in all its elements and all its movements. A spiritual Light+ that touches the inner self but leaves the nature parts ignorant and unconscious is no transformation. The whole being should be lighted up by a higher consciousness and lifted into the status of a higher spiritual existence.

^{1.} On Yoga II, Tome One, p. 122

Our goal is not merely the development of the inner being but also the transformation of all our outer nature and life. We have therefore to bring down the Higher Consciousness not only into the mind and the vital but also into the physical being and even into the vety cells of the material body. For, the entire nature must be changed in order that the change may become complete and permanent. "The conditions of complete transformation are that you should be able to keep the same deep peace, wideness, strength, purity, power and plasticity from the mind downward to the very meterial cells. That is the fundamental basis." At the end, we have also to transform the external life by applying the higher consciousness to all its details; it should be made dynamic and effective in all the fields and activities of life. All our acts should proceed from the new consciousness, so that the smallest deed may be an expression of the Divine Truth, its light, power. bliss, beauty and harmony. The Integral Yoga demands that we must possess and, as far as possible, express even here in life and on earth the greatness, light, sweetness and perfection of the transcendent Godhead.

Three processest become necessary for effecting an

^{1.} Evening Talks with Sri Aurobindo, second series, by A. B. Purani

integral transformation. First, psychic change by direct action of the inmost psychic being; secondly, spiritual change by descent of a higher consciousness from the upper planes; thirdly, supramental change by the transforming action of the Supermind which is the creative power of the Divine. The influx of light, peace, power, knowledge and delight from the higher principles will convert the lower human consciousness into the higher consciousness and its higher working. The outer being by virtue of this essential change will learn to know, feel and act in terms of the higher principles. But the highest principle of Supermind alone has the power of bringing about a radical transformation. Hence for the final siddhi+ or perfection, which consists in the divinisation of man, the descent of the supermind into the human consciousness indispensable.

The descent of the Higher Consciousness from the upper spiritual planes is indeed another remarkable element in the integral Yoga. An internal realisation may lead to liberation or some change of the inner being but cannot transform the outer nature. An ascent of the lower consciousness to the higher planes followed by descent of Forces from them is the means of transformation. For complete transformation the whole higher consciousness with its Peace, Power, Light, Knowledge and Ananda must descend into the entire being—mind life and body—for

change of the life and existence, for which a full descent of the Divine Consciousness into the whole nature is indispensable. "Our Yoga", says Sri Aurobindo, "is a double movement of ascent and descent; one rises to higher and higher levels of consciousness, but at the same time one brings down their power not only into mind and life, but in the end even into the body. And the highest of these levels, the one at which it aims, is the Supermind. Only when that can be brought down is a divine transformation possible in the earth-consciousness".1

The old yogins did not go beyond the planes of the spiritual mind nor did they have the experience of the descent. They went straight from mind to the absolute Divine beyond the cosmos, which they regarded as ignorance, illusion or Lila. For their object was to pass out of the cosmic ignorance into the static and immutable Divine Truth. But the Purna Yoga teaches us that there is a dynamic Divine Truth beyond mind, the Supermind, which can descend into the present world of ignorance, create a new consciousness of the Cosmic Truth and divinised Life. The omnipotent power of the Supermind is the spiritual alchemy that can transform the lead of earthly life into the gold of life divine.

^{1.} The Riddle of This World, pp. 2-3.

The spiritual change effected by the sadhana cannot be complete unless it is a supramental change of the whole being including the physical. The descent of the Supramental Consciousness is essential for a full manifestation of the divine truth, light, power, bliss and love in the physical plane, which is the final aim of the Integral Yoga. Hence Sri Aurobindo's integral yoga is also called the Supramental Yoga or Yoga of Supramental Transformation. To quote once again his own words: "Our yoga is an endeavour to rise to the highest possible Supramental level and bring down its consciousness and power into mind, life and body."

The fullness of the yoga comes by self-perfection, which means the divine fulfilment of life or, more explicitly, "the fullness of a divine life in a divine body". Not Nirvana or salvation by withdrawal of self out of nature or beatitude in heaven beyond is our object. The aim is a divine perfection of life attained by full development of all our innate spiritual capacities. This ideal implies the highest growth of the whole human personality including mind, life and body. The yogi aspires for possession and enjoyment of the fullest spiritual power, light and bliss in this worldly life. He aims at "the most

^{1.} On Yoga II, Tome One, p. 6.

divine largeness and fullness and joy of life," for he wishes to live the Divine Life upon earth.

Man must receive into himself the power and presence of the Spirit and by the direct action of that power become a fit instrument of its self-expression. His whole being must be tuned with the Divine and turned into a channel for the outpouring of the divine love and power in the world. The legitimate activities of the nature are not to be suppressed or stopped; all the members must be allowed to function and express their powers in full, but in growing harmony with the divine truth. The Vedanta seeks for an inner realisation and identity, of our spiritual self with the Divine Being with the object of release from re-birth. The Tantra aims higher at mastery over the nature and its spiritual change; it also seeks for release but by identification with the Divine Shakti. The Integral Yoga aims at union in both the aspects so that the human being may become divine and manifest fully the Eternal Truth in all its movements.

The Integral Yoga, by adoption of the dynamic ideal of self-perfection which is an altogether new stand-point, becomes a Yoga of Expression no less than realisation. We must know and possess the highest truth and also express it in our life and action. We should love and serve our fellowmen as visible forms of the Divine. Our life should be a

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CHAPTER II

A YOGA OF SYNTHESIS

The Sadhaka of an integral Yoga will take an integral view of his goal and seek its integral realisation.

No synthesis of Yoga can be satisfying which does not, in its aim, reunite God and Nature in a liberated and perfected human life. Sri Aurobindo

The Integral Yoga is a yoga of synthesis which has assimilated the principles and practices of many previous yogas and developed out of them a new system for the spiritual fulfilment of human life. All old yogas use one power or group of powers of the being for union with one as pect of the Divine. Each yoga selects certain activities of the lower nature and attains through them some definite realisation suited to its particular aim. But the Purna Yoga seeks integral union in all divine aspects and through every part of the human nature. Again none of the past yogas accepted as its goal the transformation of life and nature which is the ultimate object of the Yoga. The former Yogins wanted to obtain the inner freedom and

divine example to others, an expression of the supreme law of love and harmony. The object here is not merely the joy of inner communion with God but the delight of expression of the realised Self in the material world. A union with the Divine in essence is the first step; the final aim is to manifest the glories of God in active life through the perfected human nature. Thus the Purna Yoga has the double object of realising or possessing God and also acting on the world from a consciousness possessed by God. "Our aim must be", says Sri Aurobindo, "to be perfect as God in His being and bliss is perfect, pure as He is pure, blissful as He is blissful, and, when we are ourselves siddhas in Purna Yoga, to bring all mankind to the same divine perfection."

^{1.} The Hour of God, p. 41.

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wealth of the spirit by an escape from the world or indifference to the activities of life.

But an integral Yoga aiming at perfection must spiritualise both the inner and the outer life of man for a divine change of his entire existence. Hence the Purna Yoga combines all powers and processes of Yoga for attaining its greater object of transformation of human life. It integrates many systems in a very rich and vast synthesis which includes their essentials and yet transcends them in a new supreme fulfilment. We have therefore to attempt a brief survey of the central principles and basic methods of the chief paths of India upon which this Yoga is founded and to point out where and how far Sri Aurobindo's Yoga adheres to or departs from the traditional systems. The reader will find this comparative study helpful in forming a clearer idea of the synthetic character, integral aim and superior value of this life-changing and world-changing Yoga.

Hathayoga attempts to divinise the body by making use of the body and the life as means of union. It seeks to remove the imperfections of the body and the life energy and acquire self-mastery by its two effective methods known as asana and pranavama. The asanas or physical posture exercises prevent the body from dissipating the pranic or vital energy by inhibiting its restless movements. This leads to enormous increase of the life energy possessing a much greater and more effective force than the normal physical powers of man. By

means of asanas and other physical processes, the body purified from its many disorders becomes a perfected instrument. "It is freed from its ready liability to fatigue; it acquires an immense power of health; its tendencies of decay, age and death are arrested."

The pranayama or breath-control consisting of rhythmic breathing exercises gives complete control over the life power in the body. The methodical practice of pranayama purifies the nervous system and enables the vital energy to circulate through the system without any disorder or obstruction. The prana may be directed to any part of the body so that one may maintain a perfect health and soundness of the body and the vital sheath. All the power of the life and body is purified and concentrated by the combined process of asana and pranayama. This concentrated power is then directed towards the lowest physical centre in which the Nature-power lies coiled up and asleep in the human system. The Power or Shakti rises awakened through the other (upper) centres and awakens too, in its ascent and passage, the forces in each successive centre. At length it reaches the brain centre, where it becomes one with divine consciousness. The Jiva or psychic in the heart moving along with the Shakti here meets with Shiva, the Supreme Consciousness, and attains its highest fulfilment.

^{1.} The Synthesis of Yoga, p. 607.

By the above two processes of the yoga the sadhak acquires robust health, prolonged youth, a diseasefree body and extraordinary longevity. The mind and the will of the soul inhabiting the body are no longer subject to the body or the life or their combined limitations. The yogi opens to occult experiences, larger fields of consciousness and supernormal powers denied to ordinary human life. The net spiritual gain of the system is however very small compared with the enormous expenditure of energy required for its achievement. The Hathayogi is too much occupied with suddhi and siddhi, the purification of the nervous system and the attainment of supernormal powers. Here the body demands so great an attention that the psychic and spiritual results are relegated to a remote and ultimate stage. But these results are obtained more easily through directly psychic and spiritual methods in other yogas.

Rajayoga aims at the liberation and perfection not of the bodily but of the mental being. This system makes use of the entire mind to reach the Divine Being or the static self above Nature by which man passes beyond the mental into the spiritual existence. Rajayoga adopts the practice of asana and pranayama, but here each is limited to a simple process intended for attaining its own ultimate purpose. Rajayogic pranayama opens up entirely the six chakras or centres of consciousness and prepares for concentration of

the mind in samadhi or mindless yogic trance. The mind fixes on the idea of the Divine, supported by a name or a form or a mantra till at last it sinks in the Divine in still absorbed union. By another method all thought is excluded and the mind is forced to sink into an absolute silence where it can only reflect the Purusha or pure Being above. The Purusha is separated from the Prakriti and regains its native peace, purity and freedom, leaving the ignorant nature or watching it as a witness, tada drastuh swarupe abasthanam.

The whole object of Rajayoga is union with the Highest by quieting or silencing the functions of the mind and sinking in samadhi. But in this yoga the mind instead of falling silent or inactive becomes an instrument for divine action. The Purna Yoga insists upon dynamic unity with the Divine for the spiritual change and fulfilment of the nature, because the static self has no power to transform or divinise the nature. Purusha separates from Prakriti not in order to abandon her, but in order to be the knower, lord and the upholder of the nature. Rajayoga lays stress on Samadhi or mindless trance as the means of the highest experience. But the aim here is "a waking union with the Divine", which means a consciousness aware of the Divine and the truth in all circumstances. The Gita teaches us to remain united with the Divine at all moments, in all conditions and amidst all occupations. which is the greatest victory.

The Triple way or trimarga of Knowledge, Devotion and Works of the Bhagavad Gita is integrated into the Purna Yoga. The Gita utilises the spiritual powers of Godward knowledge, works and adoration for attaining divine oneness. These powers correspond to the three functions of the mind, which are knowing, willing and feeling. By concentrating on the Divine with the help of these three soul powers in the mind, we unite respectively with the conscious Being, the conscious Power and absolute delight of the Supreme Divine, the Brahman. The union of man with God in all these aspects must therefore be the foundation of an integral Yoga seeking for union with the whole Divine and its spiritual Nature. But the three yogas of the Gita are usually practised as distinct disciplines separate from and even antagonistic to each other. The Purna Yoga however seeks a combined completeness of all the three together as the goal of its own Triple Path* for an integral divine realisation

The three yogas of knowledge, of devotion, of work are the three supports of the Integral Yoga. An exclusive pursuit of any one way may lead to a one-sided realisation. The sadhaka of the Purna Yoga may follow any one or all of these ways according to the bent of his inner nature. But in the end they must be harmonised, or, if possible, unified so that the

For the Triple Path of this yoga vide the Synthesis of Yoga. pages 91—92.

whole being may be united with the Divine. For God is a trinity of Wisdom, Power and Bliss; so the total realisation must include the elements of knowledge, love and will. Again, according to this Yoga, one has to find the Life Divine on earth after having realised God. What is required for the purpose is not merely union in soul but also transformation of the lower self by possession of the Divine Nature. This is the highest perfection of our personality as conceived by the Purna Yoga; it is an original conception not found in any other system.

The Integral Yoga contains all the essential elements of the Gita's yoga, but the two are not identical. The Gita is indifferent to the mental, vital and bodily perfection and only seeks for the purity of nature,. which has to change so far as not to be an obstacle to the divine realisation. Hence the Gita's yoga did not aim at the transformation of nature down to the physical, which is necessary for an integral union with the Divine. The principal method of this Yoga is the descent of the divine consciousness from the supramental plane for the perfect fulfilment of human life : but about this the Gita is silent. Again surrender to the Supreme Divine Shakti, the World Mother, is indispensable for the transformation of human nature: so in the Purna Yoga, the surrender must be not only to the Divine Person as in the Gita but also to the Divine Mother. Besides surrender in the Gita is an

ultimate state coming after a prolonged discipline; but the Purna Yoga begins with surrender as the main power for its siddhi or fulfilment.

A more synthetic system than that of the Gita is the Tantra. This yoga takes up the will power of mind, of life and sensations as its instrument. The object is not merely liberation of the soul of man, but also a full perfection of the natural being and enjoyment of the spiritual power, light and joy in the human existence. The chief practice of the Tantra is connected with the development of the Kundalini Shakti which is the surpreme Power residing in the human body. She is conceived as a tiny serpent lying coiled up and asleep in the lowest centre called muladhara at the base of the spinal column. At this lowest level, the human consciousness is narrow and ignorant and the energy mechanical and extremely limited. But the Serpent Power is awakened by the practice of Pranayama with the help of mystic mantras; it uncoils itself and moves upward through the chakras for union with the Divine Spirit in the cerebral centre called Sahasrara. Here the Shakti meets with the Purusha called Shiva in a deep, liberating and blissful samadhi of union, and man becomes fully awakened and perfectly self-conscious.

The Integral Yoga has assimilated many truths and experiences of the Tantra. It seeks like the Tantra not merely mukti or liberation from the ignorance but

bhukti or cosmic enjoyment of power and delight. But in Purna Yoga the possession of divine powers is not for any egoistic purpose, but for the fulfilment of the Divine will in the world. The Tantra places its reliance upon the Divine Mother for all progress and lays stress upon the ascent of the consciousness through the chakras or nervous centres. There are also the opening of the chakras and the descent of the consciousness through them. All this Tantric knowledge is accepted by this yoga as essential for a spiritual change of the being. But the Purna Yoga does not accept the set processes of the Tantra for the purification and opening of the centres. Here it is a pressure of the psychic principle within or of the divine Force descending from the higher consciousness that opens the centres.

Again in the Tantric Yoga one speaks of the top of the head as the summit of ascent; but here the consciousness is drawn upward to the ranges above the head, which possess the dynamic power of changing the lower nature altogether. Moreover, Tantra insists upon the rousing of the Kundalini Shakti sleeping at the base of the spinal cord, which quickly brings realisation. But our main effort is the opening of the psychic being in the heart centre, which is the spark of the Divine in nature. The psychic once awakened takes charge of the sadhana and prepares the individual being for all spiritual realisation. Lastly, the Tantric

experience of the Mother, the Ishwari Shakti, being the supreme is here supplemented by the realisation of the Divine, the Ishwara, as the ultimate Reality and goal of the sadhana.

As Sri Aurobindo's yoga is integral, so its method also must be integral. The aim of the Yoga is "a turning of all the being in all its parts towards the Divine." The mind, the heart, the will, the life and power of action, all have to turn and change so that the nature may become one with the nature of the Divine. Hence this Yoga takes up the processes of many other yogas in its all-inclusive system. The processes of knowledge, of devotion, of spiritual action, of self-purification, of separating Purusha and Prakriti -all are included for perfection or radical change of the entire being and nature. But these are adopted "only as a part action and present aid" to its own distinctive method. A new integral method most efficacious in its operation has been carved out for the Yoga, which is as comprehensive as its object.

The Integral Yoga is the most difficult of all yogas. The object is transformation and divine perfection of the human nature, which is too difficult to be achieved by unaided human effort. A total submission to the divine guidance and an entire reliance upon the Divine Grace are therefore the chief support of the Yoga. One has to call in the Divine Shakti to fulfil the sadhana by the direct working of her supreme

transforming power. For she alone has the all-wise and all-powerful force capable of effecting a radical change of the half-animal human nature. Hence the main principle of the Yoga is surrender, but personal effort must not be abandoned. Persistent labour and discipline are needed for rejection of impurities, control over the nature and removal of yogic difficulties. This twofold process of surrender going on hand in hand with tapasya or spiritual effort is a peculiar feature of the Purna Yoga.

Again the psychic or soul in nature is best fitted to lead the sadhana by preparing the being for integral union with the Divine. So the main stress is upon the psychic opening for a preparatory purification and psychic change of the nature. But the descent of the Higher Consciousness is indispensable for creating in us the divine consciousness and a spiritual new birth of the being. Ascent upwards is deemed sufficient for other yogas, whose object is Nirvana or self-immergence in the impersonal Divine. But in this Yoga ascent is only the first step; it is a means to the descent which is necessary to conquer and transform the lower nature. The descent of the Supermind is the final process which changes fully the human into the divine consciousness. Thus we see that all paths and all processes have a place in this synthetic system whose object is divinisation of the whole of our existence.

As the method is integral, so the results too are integral. First, an integral realisation of the Divine: of the Divine in its featureless unity and also in its numerous aspects; of the Self beyond all, and also of the same self in all things, all creatures and all activities. Secondly, an integral liberation; not only the liberation of the soul from the bonds of the nature but that of the nature also from all impurities and ignorance. Thirdly, an integral union; a perfect purity results in a complete union with the Divine that is realised not only in the inner being, but also in all the members of the outer nature. We become one with Him not only in the spirit, but also in the supermind. mind, life and body. Fourthly, an integral beautitude : we have the bliss of eternal oneness or of diverse relations with the Beloved as well as the Ananda of all that is in the world seen as symbols of the Divine. The final outcome is the spiritual conversion and perfection of the various elements of our personality. All the spiritual powers of our being find their uttermost fulfilment in the Divine and these are poured out for a divine action freely upon the world. The divinisation of our entire being and life is the crowning result of this Yoga, which fully vindicates the ancient saying that men are Sons of Immortality, amritasya putrah

CHAPTER III

THE INTEGRAL DIVINE

Brahman is the Alpha and the Omega. Brahman is the One besides whom there is nothing else existent.

There is one Lord and Self, and the many are only His representations and becomings.

God, Nature and Jiva are the three terms of existence and these three are one being. Sri Aurobindo

The object of the Purna Yoga is union with the Divine in its different aspects, which are both cosmic and supracosmic. A complete knowledge of the manysided yet single Divine is therefore essential for the siddhi of the Yoga. A limiting ignorance that separates the being from its infinite origin is the source of all evil and suffering. The release comes by an integral knowledge of the One that becomes multiple in the creation. By this knowledge we realise God, self and Nature not as distinct realities but as the different aspects of a single reality. A consciousness of this essential unity brings harmony in our inner and outer life and delivers us from all ignorance, selfishness and suffering. Hence we must try to form a clear conception of the ultimate Truth or Reality and its manifold representation in the universe

3

The Supreme Reality of the universe is an infinite, ineffable Absolute or Brahman beyond all manifestation. Brahman is an essential Existence, one and indivisible and infinite, besides which everything else appears as maya or illusion. Yet all is there as a secret possibility; for it contains in a seed form all that is to be manifested. The Infinite has unlimited powers of manifesting itself in forms and movement. It is formless but possessed of infinite forms; it is transcendent and at the same time immanent. It is one amidst all multiplicity, infinite even in the finite. It is static and immobile as well as dynamic and evolutionary, a state of 'absolute silence and absolute movement'. All these contraries are -harmonised and unified in the spiritual experience as aspects of the one omnipresent Reality.

To the human understanding, the Reality appears as Sachchidananda, a trinity of Existence, Consciousness and Bliss. The three divine terms are inseparable; the Reality exists, is aware of its existence and enjoys the delight of existence. The eternal One is self-existent, self-aware and full of self-bliss. But Sachchidananda is not merely a pure status or existence but also a Being with fnfinite powers of expression. He is the source and support and end of all creation. The Self-existent becomes all, knows all as himself and his indwelling delight sustains all creation. He himself has become the Cosmic Spirit and the creative Energy that we see

all around us. By his conscious Force he acts in all forms and directs and guides their movements. We have to realise this triune Being as the true self of ourselves and all beings.

Ordinarily the mind dwells on one aspect of Sachchidananda, sat or chit or anarda, for transit to a higher spiritual plane. It becomes aware of an infinite of existence, of an infinite of the consciousness of being or its infinite power and energy or of an infinite ocean of Ananda, its delight of selfexistence. For the mind can separate and feel as distinct principles what are inseparably one in a higher experience. But we must have a global experience of all aspects for a complete realisation. We must feel them as united in a trinity or fused together into a single entity and thus arrive at their oneness. But the final experience is that all is Sachchidananda, that the whole world is 'one supreme expression of concealed Wisdom, Power and Bliss', sarvam hyetad brahma. But the greatest realisation for this Yoga is that the infinite-finite Divine Person, Purushottema, is playing in the world as Sachchidananda. He is not only self-existent, self-aware and full of self-bliss but all-existent, all-aware and all-bliss. "The world is only a play of His being, knowledge and delight, sat, chit and ananda1."

^{1.} The Yoga and its Objects, p. 22.

Sachchidananda appears to us in three essential aspects-(1) Self or conscious Existence, (2) Conscious Being or Spirit and (3) God, the Divine Being. The Self is unborn, impersonal and immobile, though it sustains and pervades the universe. This aspect of Self is usually felt as a silent immutable principle turned away from the activities of Nature. The realisation of the Static Self is the swift and straight way that leads to Nirvana or liberation by rising above Nature. The Conscious Being or Purusha is more personal and always coupled with Nature. Nature acts for the will and pleasure of the Purusha who gives or refuses sanction to her movements. Purusha is the witness, support, lord and enjoyer of the forms and works of Nature. The experience of Purusha standing in relation to Prakriti is of great pragmatic importance. As witness, Purusha may detach itself and become free from subjection to lower nature. The spirit is no longer involved in the works of nature. One may then pass into the silence of the Self or become master of the nature and re-create the animal into a divine existence.

The Divine or Ishwara is the transcendent Being and Spirit. He is all light, bliss, knowledge and power. He is both in and beyond the cosmos. He transcends all creation and cosmic expression. Yet he becomes the Cosmic Self, Spirit or Person that upholds the universe. He is the master and creator of the universe. He is

the omnipresent and omnipotent All-ruler who governs the universe by his Shakti, his conscious Power. But he is not the limited personal God of the popular religions. He is nirguna, devoid of all qualities as well as saguna, possessed of infinite qualities. He is silent yet active, his activity proceeds from the depth of his silence. He is personal, because he moves and acts like a person, but also impersonal as a passive witness of all activity. He is "the Lord and Doer of works, yet a non-doer and a silent witness of the workings of Nature". The two sides of the Ishwara are not contradictory, but two aspects of a single complex Reality. Sri Aurobindo says that the Ishwara aspect as viewed above is the most comprehensive of all aspects of the Absolute.

The Conscious Power of the Brahman again appears in three aspects—Maya or "power of conceptive creation", Prakriti or Nature which is the dynamic power of execution, and Shakti or Divine Power which combines the above two powers of creation. Maya is the Consciousness and Power of the self-existent Brahman; it is "the will of being and becoming or of cessation from being and becoming" that results in the formation or dissolution of the worlds. Prakriti appears as an inert and mechanical self-driven power that acts and creates the universe. Both are sides

^{1.} The Life Divine, Vol. II (1), p. 48.

of the Divine Shakti, power of being of the Spirit who is the Supreme God.

The Cosmic Shakti is the Divine Power that acts and creates; she is the ovigin of all dynamism and becomes the mobile energy of Nature. She is the universal Mother who creates all the Gods and Goddessess that rule the world—they are but powers that express Her. The Absolute has thus two distinct sides in its nature, essential and creative. But these two sides, static silence and dynamic movement, are complementary and not contradictory. The being is the Divine Father who has built all things in his own being. His native power or chit-shakti is the Divine Mother, Aditi of the Veda, who manifests all things. The Ishwara, Lord of the universe, does all through her as executive Nature. The integral realisation comes by union with the Supreme Being and his Supreme Nature. That alone makes possible a divine living upon earth, which is the object of the Integral Yoga.

The Divine Shakti like the Divine Purusha has three poises—transcendent, universal and individual. The transcendent Shakti is the original consciousness and force of the Supreme. She is inseparably one, fused together with the absolute Being and stands above all

or, it may be said, she is the Divine in its consciousness-force"

—Letters of Sri Aurobindo on the Mother, page 80.

creation. The Supreme Mother beyond the creation is the primal source of all that exists and decrees all that happens. All is she and all is her play with the Supreme. The Universal Mahashakti creates and destroys all things by her omnipotent power. She governs all from above with the cosmic gods as her assistants. But she also enters into the creation and supports and conducts all the countless cosmic operations. The Prakriti or mechanical Nature is only her lower executive force. The transcendent Mother also becomes the individual Person, jivabhuta in her individual poise; for the individual or jiva is the direct means of fulfilling all divine possibilities in the world.

The one Supreme Self, paramatma, manifests as the individual self, jivatma, of numberless beings. The self is a portion, amsa or ray of the supreme and universal Self-Existence. So, like the Divine, the self is by nature consciousness and delight, chidananda. Being one in the many it is finite, but capable of being perfect as the Divine. Again it is not the all, but it can become All in essence by shedding the ego. Shankara says that the individual self has no separate existence, it is identical with the Brahman. The individual is an illusion, a creation of maya, that goes off when the Brahman is realised. Sri Aurobindo admits that the self is one in essence of being and consciousness with God who is its inmost reality. But agreeing with Ramanuja, he says that the individual self is real and

eternally different from the Supreme Self, the Brahman. The true individual persists even after its liberation; it is the false ego that disappears. "The soul lives: it is not abolished, it is not lost in a featureless Indefinite." The ego is to be abolished, but the central personal being (the soul or individual self) has to remain as an instrument for the Divine's work in the world.

What then is the relation between God and soul? The soul is an aspect of God, it exists only by His self-existence. The individual lives in God, by God and for God. Hence the soul can attain its highest truth by entire dependence upon the Divine who is its origin. Union with God is the object of its descent into the world of Ignorance. Complete self-surrender is the door that leads to this union in mind, life and body. Yet that unity does not preclude close yet different personal relations with the Divine. The relations of Father, Mother, Master, Friend or Lover do not contradict but fulfil the realisation of identity. The experience of difference in unity is a spiritual truth that is revealed by soul experience. By surrender we become identified with the Supreme Divine and his Divine Nature, yet we retain our individual existence. A difference in the soul personality remains even in the midst of the closest identity. That is a

^{1.} The Synthesis of Yoga, p. 576.

supreme mystery which can only be known by spiritual experience.

The individual has a dual being; the Self and Nature, Purusha and Prakriti. The Self or Jiva is in essence of its being and consciousness one with the supreme Self or Divine, so'ham. As an individual, self is a portion of the Divine, a self of the Spirit. On the nature side, the Jiva is a form of Shakti, 'a mobile power of God', a power of the spirit in movement and action. He is one with the universal power in his universal status; but in his individual nature he is an instrument of the universal Shakti that rules the cosmos. According to Sri Aurobindo liberation does not consist in a cessation but in a divine perfection of the individual. An integral perfection means a union in two parts of the being, Purusha and Prakriti. The individual self is united with its timeless and universal Self, while the ignorant nature is transformed into an image of the luminous divine Nature.

The spiritual experience of union with the Divine has two sides to it, one is that of complete identity and the other of a difference in identity. The self of the individual can merge in and become wholly one with its higher Self within and above the cosmos. But the individual in his being of nature becomes an instrument of the Shakti acting through unity of consciousness with the Divine for carrying out the divine will in the creation. Surrender in the nature part does not there-

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fore conflict with but fulfils the soul's union with the Divine. At first the two aspects appear as separate, but when the mind rises into the Supermind, the Jiva becomes one in both the aspects at the same time. For the Supermind is the divine mind that is capable of grasping all aspects of the truth at one perception. This consciousness alone makes possible the double feeling of unity and difference in a single unified experience. Sri Aurobindo says, "Entire perfection comes by identity with God in essential experience and relation of difference with Him in experience of manifestation."

^{1.} The Hour of God, p. 18.

CHAPTER IV

THE DIVINE LILA

Evolution is the one eternal dynamic law and hidden process of the earth-nature.

A complete involution of all that the Spirit is and its evolutionary self-unfolding are double term of all material existence.

Sri Aurobindo

The world is a cosmic game, a Lila, a divine play of spiritual involution and evolution; they are the two eternal modes of the creative movement of the Divine Shakti. An integral vision of the Divine therefore must necessarily include a knowledge of its twofold process of involution—becoming involved—and evolution or unfoldment in the form of the universe, Vishwarupa. We should know how the One unfolds itself as the Many in the universe and the goal towards which the creation moves. A knowledge of God's purpose in the cosmos will also enable us to understand the object of our existence therein; for we are part and parcel of the cosmos. Again the concept of evolution is the scientific basis that supports the method of spiritual development in the integral Yoga. The

two chief movements of ascent and descent in this Yoga are correlated to the two similar movements of evolution in the universal Nature. So we shall set forth below the process and meaning of the Divine's manifestation in the universe.

The supreme Truth in manifestation is Sachchidananda, a trinity of Existence, Consciousness and Bliss. This First Principle is beyond and antecedent to creation. But by its will of self-creation it manifests itself as the material universe for multiple play of its self-delight. But how does the One become the many or what is the process by which it unfolds itself in the form of the universe? Consciousness is before creation a state of pure unity and equilibrium without activity and without vibration. But by a pressure of will it creates manifold centres of activity and play of delight. The One becomes the Many by limitation or involution of his infinite being and powers forming thereby differences in its essential unity. This means the descent of the Spirit downward till it becomes its opposites which are ignorance and inconscience.

The Supreme comes down through several states or gradations known as Lokas or Worlds, which are planes of consciousness. In this descent we may distinguish seven distinct principles of the being organised into seven different planes of existence: Sat, Chit, Ananda, Supermind, Mind, Life, Matter. The first three are the original and fundamental principles. Here the

Supreme puts out in front his highest powers of the divine existence, the divine consciousness and the divine delight. The fourth principle is the Supermind, where the One retains its original unity in spite of its manifoldness; here a sense of unity prevails even amidst a diversity of appearance. These four highest planes manifest the pure presence of the Reality and here we find a complete freedom and knowledge. The remaining three by a principle of separation lapse into an apparent division of existence. This lapse or fall curbs freedom by attachment and limits knowledge by the false ego sense. Consciousness veils itself more and more until it reaches the last limit of a total inconscience, which may be called nescience or negation of consciousness.

The Supermind or Gnosis, called Rita-Chit in the Veda, is the all-wise and all-powerful Consciousness of the Divine Nature. This principle possesses unlimited wisdom and infinite power, because it is the self-power, atmashakti, of the Divine. The Supermind is called Truth-Consciousness, as it is fully aware of and keeps in constant touch with the Divine Truth. It is the Vidya-Shakti, the Knowledge-Will and creative power of the Divine; it is the organising, formative and creative power and joy of the Eternal. The Supramental Power manifests direct its own world of Light and Truth based on the unity and harmony of the One Existence where everything moves in the right order. It is the true and happy creation, ritam bhadram, since

all in it shares in the perfect knowledge, power and joy of the Vijnana, the divine Gnosis.

The plane of Supermind no doubt contains many aspects of the one Truth and many centres of the one infinite and omnipotent Power. But the different aspects and centres are grasped as inseparably one, not divided as in the inferior light and power of the other planes. For the knowledge here is luminous, total, complete and harmonious. There is no division or opposition here as in the mind. Difference exists but there is no division or discord. Each individual formation is truly conscious of its unity with the divine essence and divine power. Each form again is perceived as a form of the one existence and not in any manner as a separate existence. All the Powers of the Divine work here in perfect harmony, without any opposition or collision found in the lower grades of existence. The Supermind is the connecting link between the infinite Sachchidananda above the creation and its formation as the finite world below. Therefore this principle alone has the supreme power to transform the world by bringing down the Truth, Light and Ananda from the supernal planes of the Eternal and Infinite.

Overmind which is the original Divine Maya. This plane of consciousness is 'tull of lights and powers'. The Overmind knows the One as the essence and supporting power of all things. But here unity recedes before

the growing tide of the sense of separation. The Truths and Powers of the Supermind are here divided and broken up into separate aspects and powers. Its knowledge is not essential, total and perfectly unifying like that of the Supermind. The great gods of the Overmind plane appear as separate personalities and are not unified as aspects of the One as in the Supermind. The Upanishad therefore calls it 'the golden lid' that covers the face of the Truth.

The Overmind is the beginning of Ignorance, avidva, the line where the soul turns away from its full knowledge to the principle of ignorance. The individual centres become more exclusive, separate and self-centred. But the sense of unity, the fundamental oneness of things, does not disappear altogether. Division emerges but does not create disharmony or conflict as in the mental plane. The Overmind or the principle of Knowledge—Ignorance is the intermediary between the higher half of the universe of consciousness, parardha, formed of Sat, Chit, Ananda, and Mahas (the Supramental) and the lower half, aparardha, of Mind, Life and Matter.

The third step is the Mind where the divisional principle brings ignorance, separation, conflict of truths and loss of dynamic power. Here the sense of unity disappears by a further veiling of consciousness. The mind can grasp not the whole Truth but its different aspects, which it regards as the sole or chief truth.

Thus the Mayavadin regards the silent Brahman as real and the world as Maya or illusion. He cannot realise that the world being an expression of the Real cannot be altogether false or unreal. Also the mind cannot get the true knowledge of Self or Reality which comes by concrete vision, experience and direct contact. The individuals become egoistic and live as isolated and independent beings. Each views everything from his own stand-point, ignoring the claims of others and forgetting their inner unity with himself.

The next stage comes with the descent of consciousness from Mind to Life. The ego sense grows, light becomes fainter and darkness sets in. The forces grow in strength, but these are forces of darkness. The vital is ruled by desire, passion, greed, love of power, lust for possession and other obscure movements. The last step in involution is Matter where consciousness appears to lose itself in an ocean of inconscience. Here division reaches its acme; the One, though secretly there, is lost to knowledge and we get the fullness of Ignorance.

Consciousness then begins an opposite upward course to regain its original status. This movement of ascent from a lower to a higher status is called evolution or unfoldment. Consciousness that lies concealed everywhere presses for self-expression. Evolution therefore takes place by a pressure of the Spirit within for unfoldment of its divine possibilities.

in creation. A secret Intuition which is the divine urge working within matter, compels it to bring forth the life principle latent in its essential being. Then Life which is a half-awakened consciousness is born in Matter. Life first manifested in the plant or vegetable world, which is here a nervous or physical feeling of pleasure and pain that tends towards overt sensation. The next higher formulation is the animal having a vital mind capable of feeling and sensation that have a mental value. Out of the animal evolves man with "a mind of emotion and desire, a conscious will, a growing intelligence." Evolution thus proceeds from inert matter to subconscious plant, from the plant to semi-conscious animal and thence to the conscious human being. As man is an imperfect being, 'an evolved animal', he has to become by process of evolution a superman, a divine individual.

The ascent from a lower to a higher status is madepossible by an inner growth and change. The lower
principle becomes subtle, receptive, refined, better
organised and more capable of evolving to a higher
state of existence. This leads to the emergence from
within of a higher principle, which then begins to work
by a twofold process. It rejects the baser and darker
elements, but also assimilates the suitable materials by
elevating them into nobler forms and finer modes of
expression. For example, the life principle upon
emerging pours its vitality into Matter; it changes

matter into living substance capable of movements of feeling and action. Similarly, Mind upon evolving mentalises both life and matter so that they come to have some lower forms of the mind, namely, the vital and the physical mind. The self-awareness or egosense of the mind spreads over the whole being and the parts now become conscious of their own separate existence. Thus mind transforms and subdues the two lower principles for a higher conscious mode of existence. Each new principle or formation in this manner takes up in order to lift up what existed before its advent.

Thus evolution proceeds by a combination of the higher state with the lower called integration, + which causes a total change of the whole being and nature. For example, when mind emerges both matter and life are changed so that matter becomes more sensitive and life becomes more powerful than ever before. Similarly, the emergence of the Supermind will bring about a supreme spiritual change of mind, life and body. The baser elements will become much richer, greater, more powerful and perfect by a new higher integration. Thus we find that when a new principle emerges, the lower factors are transformed and uplifted into a higher state of superior value and formation. Dr. S. K. Maitra says, "Evolution, therefore, does not mean the isolated raising of any principle to a higher level, but the uplift and transformation of all the principles". He also avers that the idea of integration is Sri Aurobindo's own contribution to the theory of evolution; for this conception is not found in any other system.

But a mere urge from below is not enough to evolve a higher status; for the difference is immense between a lower and a higher grade. A descent from the higher planes is also necessary for a definitive change and manifestation. Evolution is thus a double process of ascent and descent, a going up to meet the higher and a coming down to unite with the lower. Thus when matter had been suitably changed and prepared to express life movements, Life descended from its own vital region above to take a concrete shape in Matter. Similarly, when Life improved and became ready for a higher living, Mind from the mind plane came down to organise itself in life and matter. Evolution or ascent becomes possible because of the descent of the higher into the lower principle. The next stage is the descent of Supermind for the purpose of utter fulfilment of mind, life and body as glorious instruments of the Divine.

Another essential truth relating to the evolutionary movement must be indicated and stressed in this place. The evolution of Nature has an inner spiritual aspect

^{1.} The Meeting of the East and the West in Sri Aurobindo's Philosophy, p. 40

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beyond its outer appearance as a biological movement. Evolution means not merely a development of forms and species but a progressive growth of consciousness. The whole process implies an emergence of the Spirit involved in the obscurity of Nature. For, all that are divine, such as Beauty, Knowledge, Ananda, etc., lie concealed everywhere and try to reveal themselves in outer form and action. The involved Spirit, "a concealed and self-imprisoned Divine", is moving slowly towards full expression of its hidden powers and capacities in the material plane for the utmost perfection of both man and Nature, Sri Aurobindo takes a fully spiritual view of the evolution as a ceaseless process of unfoldment of the Spirit involved in the ignorance and inconscience of matter. He says, "What we call evolution is an evolution of Consciousness and an evolution of the Spirit in things and only outwardly an evolution of species."1 The manifestation of the Spirit in earth-life and Matter is the whole meaning or the central motive of the world's evolution.

We have seen that the Universal Consciousness conducts the evolution along two lines, one of ascent and the other of descent. The ascent is an upward movement for the discovery of the hidden Self and Spirit and the descent is a downward course of the higher principles into the evolved levels of mind, life.

^{1.} Letters, Vol. I, p. 56

and body. The aim of the movement is to bring down the higher consiousness into the lower planes of existence. This twofold process of the evolution is therefore called Nature's Yoga for self-discovery. Here the Divine Shakti after having involved herself in the world is moving back to her original status in the Spirit. But this cosmic yoga is a slow and subconscious process, while the individual yoga is a rapid and conscious movement towards the goal. The Purna Yoga follows Nature's process of ascent and descent of the consciousness for a divine fulfilment of mind, life and body. Here one has to ascend beyond the mind into the supermind and bring down its consciousness and power into the triple nature for its complete spiritual change. This Yoga takes up. develops and completes the process of human evolution by following Nature's own method of onward movement in the world manifestation.

The object of the Yoga, as of Nature, is spiritual evolution, which is indeed the whole meaning of man's existence here. But the evolution of man proceeds through a change of consciousness unlike that of Nature whose first care is a change of physical organisation. The individual evolves and grows into a more and more developed consciousness; for it is through a change of consciousness, and no longer through a new bodily organism, that his evolution must be effected. Dr. Maitra rightly points out that

the recognition of this cardinal truth of evolution by Sri Aurobindo is another original feature of his system.

The evolution proceeds from the physical man, who living in the physical mind attaches most importance to objective things and to his outer life. Next comes the vital man dominated by the vital mind and the ambition for affirmation and expansion of lifepower. Lastly, we find the mental man who is guided by the pure mind of thought and intelligence. He is the poet, the thinker, the seer, the guide and leader of men. Finally, rising above the mind, man comes to possess the supramental consciousness by which he becomes aware of, enters into and finally unites himself with the Divine Reality. Evolution proceeds from matter through plant and animal to the physical man, vital man, mental man and spiritual man. Last comes the supramental man who is the perfection of the spiritual man.

The evolution of man is a movement of progress from lower to higher levels of consciousness. The highest level is the Supreme Sachchidananda or the Absolute that is the origin and support and reality of all existence. This divine Being becomes all and dwells in all that it manifests. Man is an eternal portion of the Sachchidananda and partakes of its Being, Consciousness, Energy and divine Delight; this is the 'root principle' of his existence. The soul in the universe has to become one with the Divine Being, its divine

Existence, Consciousness and Delight of Being. Its nature too must raise itself to the divine Nature by a gradual process of transformation. The outer self no less than the inner must be possessed of the Divine and at the same time possessed by Him and moved by his Divine Energy. The entire being should become a channel of expression of the Infinite and live and act in a complete self-giving and surrender.

But the individual lives, moves and has his being in his greater cosmic Self and Nature; so he must recover his unity with all individual beings and the whole universe. He finds that he is one with the cosmos and Nature, but he also realises that he is one with God, the Spirit that is manifest in the cosmos and the Lord of Nature. Lastly, the unity of God and Nature also becomes manifest to the individual. He discovers that it is the Spirit who has become all these becomings; he feels that it is the Shakti or Power of the Lord of all creation which is the Nature and is acting in the cosmos. This 'triune knowledge' of himself, of God and of Nature is the highest goal of human effort and labour. The conscious unity of the three-God, Self and Nature-in man's own consciousness will be the summit of his spiritual evolution and the sure foundation of his divine perfection.

The consciousness of the One Divine in all, sarvam brahma, brings liberation from our ordinary limitation by the mental, vital and physical consciousness. The

members of our being are released from their habitually narrow, petty and egoistic movements and they come to embrace calm, equality, wideness, universality, infinity. This liberation makes possible the ascent to the Supermind and the descent of its Power, which alone can transform mind, life and body for their highest divine perfection. For the goal of development is not only the fullness of inner consciousness but also the transformation of our outer nature into the divine Supernature. So there must be an evolution of the outer nature as well as an evolution of the inner being for an integral perfection of our personality. spiritual completeness of the internal and external life is the sole object of man's endeavour in his terrestrial existence. Sri Aurobindo says, "To find, know and possess the Divine existence, consciousness and nature and to live in it for the Divine is our true aim and the one perfection to which we must aspire."1

The following verses from Sri Aurobindo's immortal symbolic epic, Savitri (Book I, Canto IV), sum up in superb poetry the rationale and final result of the whole movement, which is the birth of the Superman with divine nature out of the half-animal human being.

This transfiguration is earth's due to heaven: A mutual debt binds man to the Supreme: His nature we must put on as he put ours; We are sons of God and must be even as he: His human portion, we must grow divine. Our life is a paradox with God for key.

^{1.} The Synthesis of Yoga, p. 410

CHAPTER V

HUMAN PERSONALITY

To fulfil God in life is man's manhood. He starts from the animal vitality and its activities but a divine existence is his objective.

It is part of the foundation of Yoga to become conscious of the great complexity of our nature, see the different forces that move it and get over it a control of directing knowledge.

Sri Aurobindo

The Integral Yoga aims at the perfection of all the elements of the human personality. To attain this object, one must become conscious of oneself, of the different parts of the being and their respective functions and faculties. The parts must be distinguished, one from the other, so that we may find out clearly the origin of the movements that occur in us and the many mpulses, reactions and wills that drive us to action. But men are aware only of their outer surface nature whose movements are constantly shifting, mingling or jarring with one another. A great disorder prevails there, which man has no power to set right. The remedy lies in turning to the higher parts which alone can control and change the workings of the lower nature.

On going inside we become aware of the parts of our being as quite separate and clearly distinct from each other. We feel them as members of a complex whole, each with its own place and function and all governed by a Central Being who is their master. A knowledge of the whole being is therefore essential for yogic purposes, for knowing ourself and a greater living on earth. Hence a brief account is given below of the nature and function of the different planes and parts of the human personality. This account, as given by Sri Aurobindo, is more systematic, comprehensive and deep-probing than what has hitherto been supplied by any other psychologist of the East or the West.

I. Purusha and Prakriti: Man in his essential being is consciousness. An analysis of our inner experience reveals that self-consciousness has two parts distinct from each other. One part called the Purusha or Self is static, it is still and passive and merely witnesses or supports. The other part called Prakriti or Nature is dynamic, it is creative and executive and is supported. The former is silent, unmoved and immobile; the latter acts, propels and guides all movements for change or creation. The two beings work generally in unison, but are also at conflict for control and mastery. Both try to get the upperhand in the movements of the being.

But a closer research proves that the Purusha can

not only stand apart from Nauret as a witness but also control and change her by granting or refusing sanction to her workings. To a higher consciousness the duality of being called Purusha and Prakriti is only a 'phenomenal appearance'. The only reality in the universe is the Spirit manifesting itself in all movements of the universe. This one spirit presents itself everywhere as a great all-pervading duality called Purusha-Prakriti or Ishwara-Shakti. 'Soul and Nature in us too are only a dual appearance of the one existence.'' Purusha is not merely the Witness but the Lord of Nature and Prakriti is his executive energy; Purusha is Ishwara, Prakriti is his Shakti.

Purusha or the Self, also called the Atman, is our highest, eternal and central Being. It is a portion of the Divine Self that supports all the rest and uses them for its manifestation. The Atman holds together the different parts of the being and controls them through the mental thought and will or the psychic will and impulsion. But it stands pure and calm above the Nature "unaffected by the stains of life, by desire and ego and ignorance." The self is by nature free, wide, without limits and untouched by the movements of mind and life and body. This Central Being has two forms—the Jivatman which is

^{1.} The Synthesis of Yoga, p. 862

above the manifestation in life and the soul or psychic entity that stands behind the same and upholds all the parts of the nature.

The Jiva or Atman is man's eternal being one in essence with the Self or Spirit above the cosmos; the soul is his cosmic and mutable being at once one with and part of the universal spirit. The Jiva presides over the personal evolution but is not involved in it being prior to evolution. This 'essential personality' requires no development, no evolution, as it always feels its unity with the Divine. The soul on the other hand is the divine element within us that comes down into the evolution for effecting a psychic change in the individual nature. This being evolves with the evolving nature and supports or leads the evolution—mental, vital, physical, psychic—of the individual nature.

The Jivatman puts forward a representative or conscious form' of itself on each plane of the consciousness. Thus it becomes the mental or manomaya Purusha in the mental plane, the vital or pranamaya Purusha in the vital plane, the physical or annamaya Purusha in the physical. But the chief power or projection of the Jiva is the soul or psychic, the Purusha seated behind the heart. The psychic supports and guides or leads the Purushas on the various levels towards the effectuation of a divine change of the human nature. It is the representative

of the Jivatman in the individual nature. When the higher self-knowledge comes, the Jivatman and the psychic being join together. For then there is no difference between the two, as the psychic has become aware of the Divine as its origin, the truth of its-being and the master of its nature.

The psychic in course of its evolution unites with but does not merge in the Jivatman. The Jivatman knows itself as one with the Divine and merge in the divine consciousness,* On the contrary. the psychic, though a portion of the divine, feels a difference in identity; its natural attitude is to feel. itself as the Child, the Son of God, the Bhakta. The Jiva is realised as the individual Self, Atman, the central being above the nature; its realisation brings. silence, freedom, wideness, mastery, purity, a senseof universality. The psychic is realised as the Purusha behind the heart: its realisation brings bhakti, selfgiving, surrender, turning of all the movements Godward, rejection of all that is false, evil and ugly, openness to the Truth of the Self and the Divine. "The experience of the Jivatman and its unity with the supreme or universal Self brings the sense of liberation, it is this which is necessary for the supreme spiritual deliverance; but for the transformation of the life

[&]quot;Note. "What is called merging takes place in the Divine Consciousness when the Jivatman feels itself so one with the Divine that there is ro'hing etse."—Letters, Vol. II, p. 186

and nature, the awakening of the psychic being and its rule over the nature are indispensable."1

Prakriti has two aspects, the lower and the higher. The lower nature, apara prakriti, is the Prakriti of Ignorance separated in consciousness from the Divine. It appears as a mechanical energy that forms and moves the world. It manifests all minds, lives and bodies in the universe. But really it is the outer or executive side of the Higher Nature. This Superior Nature or para prakriti is the Divine Shakti. the living Consciousness and Force of the Divine. She is the manifesting power of the Divine, always free from ignorance and its consequences. It is she who manifests as Jivatman, supporting the evolution of the natural existences in the world. Man living in the ignorance is subject to the lower Prakriti, which binds the Purusha by her three gunas or qualitative modes, namely, sattwa, the principle of light and harmony, rajas, the kinetic principle and tamas, the principle of obscurity and inertia. But by spiritual evolution man becomes aware of and unites with the higher Nature or Supernature, which is the supramental Nature, the eternal Nature of the Supreme.

The lower nature is made of Ignorance and brings forth the life of the ego, while the higher Nature is made of knowledge and leads us to the divine life. The

^{1.} On Yoga II, Tome One, p. 303

aim of the Yoga is the passage from the lower life of ignorance to the higher life of knowledge. This transit is ordinarily effected by the rejection of the lower and an escape into the higher nature; but in this yoga it comes about by the transformation of the lower and its elevation to a higher supramental Nature. The supramental contains the spiritual counterparts of the three gunas, namely, Jyoti, self-existent spiritual Light, tapas, illumined Energy and sama, peace and spiritual calm. The inferior gunas can be transformed into their divine counterparts by the yogic processes of ascent of the consciousness into the Supernature and its descent into the lower nature of mind, life and body. Man by assuming the Divine Nature becomes divine man or Superman with infinite power, 'light and joy. The Jivatman in its essence of Self or Spirit is one with the Supreme Purusha. But on the side of nature he is one with the Shakti, the power of Self and Spirit. "To realise this double oneness is the condition of the integral self-perfection."1

II. Soul and Psychic Being—The psychic entity or Soul in the central being in the evolution. It is 'a spark of the Divine Spirit' that proceeds from and represents that Spirit in the evolution. It is the Purusha upholding the Prakriti or individual nature.

^{1.} The Synthesis of Yoga, p. 869

The soul supports the mental, vital and physical beings and their evolution in nature. This divine spark contains within it all divine possibilities. But it has to evolve them, to give them shape and form, and in doing so it puts forth as its representative in the lower nature the individual psychic being, the Chaitya Purusha. The soul or psychic essence is the divine element dwelling in all living beings from the lowest to the highest. There it dwells in order to lead them in their development from a lower to a higher state of existence.

The psychic being is formed by the soul in course of its evolution. It grows by the experiences of the mind, vital and body in different births and carries the nature from life to life. In its origin it is no better than a nucleus, a small formation with little powers. The psychic is at first covered up by the mental, vital and physical and compelled to follow their directions. It may send influences from behind but has no power of control. But it grows and develops from birth to birth by every Godward experience or higher movement of the being. The evolution goes on until the psychic being recovers its full divinity or soul status, swarupa, and becomes the ruler of consciousness. The Mother says that the psychic being is a purely terrestrial phenomenon. knowledge in all traditions, on whatever side of the earth, says that the psychic formation is a terrestrial

formation and that the growth of the psychic being is something done upon earth."1

The psychic being persists after death, because it is our eternal and immortal self. Being a portion of the Divine, it naturally shares in the immortal nature of the Divine. The soul comes here for ascent to higher levels of consciousness through gradual evolution. It develops and grows through a cycle of births and deaths until it becomes a fully conscious individual. That is the object of its descent on earth and incarnation in material human body. Rebirth becomes necessary for the growth of the soul to its full divinity through continuous evolution by experience from birth to birth. Man who is now an incomplete being in an inane body, has to become a perfect supramental being in a divinised body. Before this full flowering of the Spirit in human life, the soul cannot go into everlasting repose elsewhere. "It is in its nature something that is put forth from the Divine to support the evolution and it must do so till the Divine's purpose in the evolution is accomplished."20

The soul gathers experiences in one life and then passes away to acquire fresh ones for further progress in another life. After death the soul passes through

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^{1.} Bulletin, Pondicherry, November '65

^{2.} Letters, Vol. II, p. 526

many planes of consciousness one after another. At first, it goes out in the subtle body into the subtle physical plane and lives there for some time in that body till it is dissolved. Then it goes into the vital plane and remains there for a time till the vital sheath disappears. The next journey that the soul takes is to the mental plane; here it lives on till the mental sheath too is dissolved. In these different planes, the soul passes through certain happy and unhappy experiences which are the results of a person's nature and actions in his earthly life. Strong desires and passions like lust, hate, greed, etc. retard the soul's journey till their forces are spent and the sheaths drop off like worn out garments. Finally the soul passes into the psychic plane where it dwells in a state of blissful repose.* There it assimilates its past experiences, which serve as the basis of its future growth in the coming life. When it returns to birth, it takes up so much of its Karma (past action) as it will require in the new life for further experience. Each time the soul is born, it assumes as a rule a new mind, life and body formed out of the materials of universal Nature,

^{*&}quot;The earthly atmosphere comprises four principles or planes, namely physical, vital, mental and psychic. The psychic world is not one world in the scale like the mental, vital or physical worlds, hut stands behind all these and it is there that the souls evolving here retire for the time between life and life,"—On Yoga II, Tome One, p. 447

"according to the soul's past evolution and its need for the future". This is the general course of the soul's after-death journey and the usual process of its rebirth. But there are numerous variations according to the nature of the individual and his development.

III. Inner Being and Inner Nature—The psychic is the inmost being veiled by the outer consciousness. Between the two there lies a vast kingdom of subliminal consciousness. This region contains an inner mind, inner vital and inner physical, which together form our true personality. These inner selves are far larger, greater and subtler than our external mind, life and physical being. They are part of the universal mind, life and Matter with which they are in close touch. The inner being knows much that is unknown to the outer, for it is in a more direct contact with the secret forces of nature. "This subliminal self has more powers, more knowledge, a freer field of movement than the smaller self that is on the surface."

The inner self has its inner senses too, a subliminal sight, touch and hearing. These senses are channels of direct knowledge of things, not the basis of indirect experience like the outer senses. In sleep or dream we enter into the subliminal region. Our waking self constantly receives from this occult source inspirations, intuitions, ideas, suggestions or urges to actions which

^{1.} On Yoga II, Tome One, p. 858 .

influence it powerfully. But it is not aware of this contact or its connection with the inner self. One must become conscious in these inner parts, because they are the proper channel for the activities of the psychic being. The outer mind, outer vital and body are more governed by the outer forces than by the inner influences of the psychic. They are too small and narrow and obscure to be its proper instruments until they undergo a psychic change.

Upon going inside one first enters into this inner region. By becoming conscious there and going deeper one can reach the hidden seat of the psychic. But it must be noted that the inner being has two parts. One part which lies just behind the veil of the outer being is the inner mental, inner vital and inner physical. Each of these is in direct touch with the cosmic forces—the secret mind-forces, life-forces, subtle physical forces belonging to the corresponding domain of universal Nature. Therefore it is subject to the dualities of joy and sorrow of the cosmos and cannot be in possession of liberation and peace. But being wider than the external self, it can receive more largely and easily the divine influence.

The other part of the inner being consists of an inmost mental, vital and physical consciousness. This being is "nearer to the soul and can more easily and directly respond to the Divine Light and Power". Hence the part is rometimes called the true mind, the true vital and the true physical consciousness. Each of them means the Purusha on that level—manamaya, pranamaya, annamaya—free from the ignorance and limitations of the lower Prakriti. The true being is wide, vast, calm, strong, without limitations and much more aware, open and free than the being on the surface. When the true being awakes one becomes aware of 'a double existence', the inner always calm and strong and the outer troubled and obscure. Then one remains stable and unmoved amidst all the movements of the lower nature. Sri Aurobindo observes, "There is no real yoga possible, still less any integral yoga, if you do not go back from the outer self and become aware of all this inner being and inner nature."

IV. Outer Being and Ego—The outer surface consciousness consists of three sheaths, namely, physical mental and vital. The physical manifests as the gross body, the vital operates as life energy and the mind creates mental forms and images.

A. The Mind—Mind in this Yoga denotes "the part of nature that has to do with cognition and intelligence". It is the power of the being that interprets the truth of existence, according to its own lights. But it is a power of ignorance and cannot know the essence of things, the inner truth of existence. Mind proceeds

^{1.} On Yoga II, Tome One, p. 354

to know by taking the object as something separate from the subject. The mental knowledge is a separative knowledge which is acquired by indirect contact with the object through the senses; it knows only the figures or images of things but not their essential reality. But true or spiritual knowledge comes by union or identity with the reality known. Thus we cannot know God by standing apart from Him as a witness but by entering into union with Him. Again mind knows by means of analysis and synthesis: it takes up the separate parts of a thing and afterwards combines them into a whole. Owing to this natural limitation it fails to go beyond the parts and perceive or sense the whole truth of anything. For example, it perceives Soul and Nature or God and Shakti as distinct realities but not as a 'two-aspected single truth.' Only the Supermind is possessed of a total knowledge of the Reality in all its aspects at a single vision. Here the whole truth is realised by union or fusion of the consciousness of the knower with that of the object of knowledge. That is why the realisation of the Supermind is necessary for the experience of the highest Truth

Intelligence or buddhi is the highest faculty of the thinking mind. It is also the greatest principle of the human being in the Ignorance. It possesses a will as well as knowledge; it has the power to find out the truth and to act according to it. But normally its knowledge of the truth is limited in capacity. The intelligence is constantly invaded, darkened or overpowered by the actions of the lower nature. Also the human reason is never in full or direct possession of the truth. All its realisations are mental; they are not the essential spiritual experience. To realise the truth, we must go beyond the buddhi to the Spirit within or above where it dwells eternally.

But the buddhi inspite of its limitations is a great asset to the human being. As long as the higher knowledge is out of reach. Reason must be our guide and master that controls and prevents us from going astray. It will protect us from all excesses, disordered passions and impulsive actions that lead us away from the truth. Moreover, Reason has a power of vision, 'an inward and upward eye', by which it can receive, however imperfectly, ideas and ideals from occult sources within or above the being provides us with potent and luminous ideas which deeply influence and mould our lives and character. Besides the buddhi, when purified and enlightened. can serve as a medium of our direct and conscious communion with the Lord of creation beyond the universe.

Mind exists in all planes from the highest to the lowest. The higher superconscient ranges consist of

the Higher Mind, Illumined Mind, Intuition and Overmind up to the border of the Supermind. Among them the upper ranges have greater unity. harmony, direct knowledge and dynamic power than the lower levels. The lower regions of the mind proper comprise (1) the Sense Mind, (2) the Vital Mind and (3) the Physical Mind or the mind in the physical. The sensational mind receives mentally the impacts of outward things and gives to them the responses of mental pleasure and pain. This mind uses the sense data in a mental way and turns them into perceptions and first ideas and in some crude way thinks, feels and wills on the sense basis. But it normally depends upon the sense organs for its knowledge and cannot go beyond their reports for any higher thinking. This mentality has also a dynamic side and reacts to the sense impacts by an acton directed to the objects of sense through the organs of action. This action is often erratic and irrational, as it is governed by the heart's blind emotions or vital demands, desires and impulses.

The Vital Mind throws into mental forms and gives expression to desires, feelings, passions, emotions and other vital movements. This mind does not think and reason like the buddhi; but it knows the vital movements and expresses them in speech and mental concepts. It is the desire-mind that craves for vital urges and seeks their satisfaction; it also thinks and

plans or dreams and imagines how best it can realise the impulse. The Physical Mind is the mind of the physical being which is concerned with physical things only. It depends for its knowledge upon the sense mind which supplies the data for its inference. It sees and understands physical objects and happenings only and does not go beyond them. It is the lowest part of the human mind and partakes more or less of the density, obscurity and inertia of the material body to which it is related. All its ideas are derived from its experiences of the external world; it is not aware of any other Truth, until it is enlightened by a higher consciousness coming from above.

The mind in the physical being doubts, denies and disbelieves all higher truths of existence; its only preoccupation is with the possession of worldly objects and enjoyment of worldly pleasures. One object of the Purna Yoga is to enlighten the physical mind by the consciousness of the higher spiritual and supramental planes. We have also a mechanical mind, sometimes called mental physical, which is part of the physical mind. Its nature is to go on turning in a circle on customary thoughts, old ideas, past impressions, etc., that come into it. These movements repeat themselves in a mechanical way without any act of pure reasoning. "The physical mind is full of ordinary habitual and constantly

recurrent thoughts and is always busy with external objects and activities."1

There is also an obscure mind of the body which is a very tangible thing. For this mind has its own will and acts from it, even without any mental will or even against that will. The body mind which is part of the physical mind, clings to old movements, readily forgets past experiences and seldom accepts anything new. Therefore it strongly resists the transformation of the functioning of the body, until it receives into itself the supramental light and force. Lastly, mind exists even in the very cells, molecules, corpuscles of the body. This mind is other than the physical mind or the bodily mind; it is the mind of the cells, the cellular mind. It is the mental substance that belongs to Matter itself. The Mother calls it the mind of Matter; for matter responds to stimuli like plants and animals with a mental reaction. The cellular mind is the most subconscious part of the physical mind and links that mind with the material substance.

B. The Vital—The vital is the Life nature made up of desires, sensations, feelings, passions such as love, joy, hatred, anger, fear, greed, lust and other kindred emotions and instincts. This being always craves for possession and enjoyment; all its movements being concerned with life normally take the form of desire—

^{1.} On Yoga II, Tome Two, p. 369

desire for object, for women, for money, power, fame, etc. It is the desire-soul and desire-nature, "a thing made up of desires and executive forces, good and bad". The vital contains the life-force in it and supplies all the enthusiasm and energy necessary for our action. All experiences, whether good or bad, of the ordinary or of the spiritual life, become possible by means of the vital energy. It is the mighty instrument by which the Divine Mother carries out her great and luminous purpose in the world; it is also a dynamic Force for all divine realisations. Hence Sri Aurobindo says, "The vital is indispensable for the divine or spiritual action; without it there can be no complete expression, no realisation in life—hardly even any realisation in sadhana." 1

The vital force, a strong vital will is very necessary for success in the spiritual as in the ordinary life, Without the support of the vital power the mind is unable to make any upward movement or carry its ideas, ideals and principles into practice in life. The vital can prevent or destroy and mar all higher movements; but also it can initiate, promote and realise all offorts for fulfilment. A strong vital being full of life-force has great courage, ambition and power for action and achievement. So it can more easily take to and succeed in the spiritual adventure, which requires great

^{1.} Letters, Vol. II, p. 362

courage, endurance and perseverance. A weak vital has not the strength to take a spiritual turn, because it easily falls under a wrong influenceor finds it difficult to go beyond the habitual nature. The crude, unrefined outer vital is full of desire and ego and the lower passions of the nature. Its sense of power and pride of ego often stand in the way of surrender which is indispensable to the Purna Yoga. Hence arises the great necessity of mastery over and purification of the vital for success in the Integral Yoga.*

C. The Ego—"Ego implies the identification of our existence with outer self, the ignorance of our true self above and our psychic being within us." The ego is a lower representative of the soul living in bondage to the ignorant Prakriti. It is a knot or ignorant mode of consciousness that brings division and conflict amidst universal unity and harmony. It is subject to the dualities of pleasure and pain and limited in powers of knowledge and will. It lives only for its own interests in disregard of the sorrows and sufferings of others. But the ego is only a formation of Nature, not a lasting or essential truth of being. "All that we internally are is not ego, but conciousness, soul or spirit. All that we

^{*}For the different parts of the vital being vide Appendix C.

^{1.} On Yoga II, Tome One, p. 313

externally and superficially are and do is not ego but Nature."1

Enlightenment brings us the knowledge that the ego is only an instrument of the universal forces that work in our frame of mind, life and body. Our sense of freedom and personal effort is an illusion of the egoistic mind; the true power belongs to the Divine. But though the ego has no real existence, yet the ego-sense is necessary to the evolution of the lower life. By separating us from the universal Prakriti it helps to heighten our material perfection. We try to make the most of our life and powers because of this sense of separativeness. But for higher divine life we must loosen the knot of the ego and eventually get rid of it altogether. The development of the ego is a pragmatic necessity for the lower life; but for the higher life the elimination of the ego is indispensable. To discover the true self within or above us, we must altogether cast away the false egosense from our mental, vital and physical consciousness. The Mother says that the ego dissolves completely when the light of the Supermind descending from above brings the full self-knowledge.

D. The Physical—Our physical plane like the mental and vital has its own consciousness. Our physical consciousness is a part of the universal

^{1.} The Synthesis of Yoga, p. 245

physical consciousness and is moved by it. This being is an instrument of the soul's expression in the physical world. The soul uses it for a direct dealing with external objects and movements and forces. It receives powers and influences from the other planes and builds formations out of them in the physical mind. Even the body has its own consciousness, which is part of our physical consciousness. The body acts from it even without any mental will of our own or even against that will. The surface mind knows very little of it, because it is largely subconscious, and feels it only in an imperfect way.

The physical being has also two other parts, one is mental and the other vital. Of the former called the physical mind, we have already spoken as a lower action of the mental principle. The latter called the vital-physical is the nervous being where the lifeforce is concerned with the reactions, desires, needs, sensations of the body. This part is below the physical mind but above the gross material; it is the field and instrument of most of the lesser movements of our external life. Its habit is to react automatically to the impacts of the outer physical and gross material life. The obstinate pettiness and habitual reactions of this being are the chief obstacles to the transformation of the outer consciousness. We have by Yoga to make the obscure physical being luminous, that is to say, full of the true consciousness

and capable of responding directly to its movements.

E. Environmental Consciousness or Circumconscient Being-This is "a consciousness surrounding the body, but part of oneself, part of the individual being, through which one is in contact with the cosmic forces and with other beings" This layer of the being is really a subtle body, almost visible, which is sometimes called the etheric body. Each man carries it around him, outside his body, even when he is not aware of it. It is through this being that one is in touch with other persons, their thoughts, feelings, etc, and connected with the forces of universal Nature. The consciousness here is very sensitive and easily takes in all kinds of sensations which rapidly change its conditions. Good suggestions increase its vigour and strength, while bad ones weaken it and open it to hostile attacks. Healthy thoughts, purity of will, a cheerful spirit, a benevolent disposition nourish and strengthen while their opposites tend to depress and weaken the protective envelope. Unclean thoughts, bad will, malice, depression of all sorts, wastage of vital energy in speech or act or feeling are harmful to its vigour, strength and plasticity. One has to remain vigilant and conscious so that no untoward

^{1.} On Yoga II, Tome One, p. 324

influence or attitude of mind may impair its serenity and moral strength and confidence,

The environmental being serves as the medium through which we can communicate with the exterior world. Universal forces are constantly pouring into us, though we are not aware of them. A large part of our thoughts, feelings, sensations is not really our own but comes from outside in mind waves, vital waves, waves of feeling and sensation, etc. coming from the surrounding universal nature. They come in upon us from Nature either directly or else indirectly through others, through circumstances, through various agencies or channels. Or they may come from other worlds and planes—mind planes, life planes, subtle matter planes—and their beings and powers that make use of our life and action for the manifestation of their forms and forces.

The outside forces first enter the environmental consciousness before they get in and take possession of the mind, vital and body. If we can become conscious of this environmental self, we can catch the thought, passion, suggestion or force of illness coming towards us through this subtle sheath of our being. Then we can prevent it from entering within by the will or otherwise. Again the things that are thrown out from the nature often do not go altogether but take refuge in this environmental atmosphere and from there they try to get in again in our unguarded moments when we

lose our vigilance. It is only when they are absolutely rejected, when the nature has been entirely purified, that they cannot enter into the adhara, the containing system.

V. The Subconscient—The subconscient is a concealed, unexpressed and obscure consciousness below the level of mind and conscious life. It is above the Inconscient but below the mind, life and body. This element is the chief support of our physical nature; it is the submental base of our being. It is made up of impressions, instincts and habitual movements that are stored up there. The subconscious retains the impressions of all the past experiences of our life. Things rejected from all other parts of the nature usually sink into this base. All impressions of past habits and experiences, samskaras, of the mind, vital and body are stored up in seed form in this region.

The samskaras dormant in the subconscient have a power of recurrence and they come up into our waking being from this region. Also they can and often do come in dream forms in ordinary sleep. Again the subconscient supports all habitual movements. Old habits, specially those of the physical and lower vital parts cannot be easily overcome because of this support. "The action of the subconscient is irrational, mechanical, repetitive. It does not listen to reason or the mental will. It is only by bringing the higher Light and Force

into it that it can change." The Light and Force of the Mother's Consciousness alone can convert its obscurity and overcome its opposition.

VI. The Inconscient-The Inconscient, sometimes called the non-being or Asat, is the negation of consciousness. It is 'the absolute zero', altogether without consciousness and therefore without any substance. For everything begins with consciousness: without consciousness there is nothing. It is the last limit of the evolution of the Spirit in the process of creation. Its characteristic powers are unconsciousness, inertia, ignorance, disharmony, pain, suffering, evil-the very opposite of our conception of the Divine. All these perversions appear in the world out of their origin in the Inconscience. The Ignorance that we find in our mind and life has iis roots in this dark nether region. Reality or Spirit turns here into dense obscure Matter and its Power becomes blind, 'unconscious' energy in the material world. But though apparently inert and unconscious, Matter is really an involved state of consciousness. Matter is Brahman, annam brahma eva declared the Upanishad, All higher principles of existence lie suppressed within it, which it can evovle again out of its obscurity. Sri Aurobindo says: "Yet in this very base of this evolution all that is divine is there

^{1.} On Yoga II, Tome One, p. 363

involved and pressing to evolve, Light, Consciousness, Power, Perfection, Beauty, Love."

VII. The Superconscient-The superconscient is felt as something above the head from which the higher consciousness comes down into the body. Normally we are aware only of the waking outer self. We are not conscious of the subliminal and the submental part of our being. Besides these we have a superconscient part lying above the normal consciousness. This part also like the above two parts exercises a great influence upon our ordinary life and action. By yogic experience we become conscious of this range of our being which far exceeds the other elements. Here we get an intrinsic knowledge of our own higher self and the supreme Spirit or God that creates, sustains and determines everything in the universe. We can then realise that we are one with the Spirit and dwell in his selfexistent Bliss and Consciousness. Sri Aurobindo says, "The role of the superconscient has been to evolve slowly the spiritual man out of the mental halfanimal "12

^{1.} On Yoga II, Tome One, p. 12

^{2.} Letters, Vol, 11, p. 582

CHAPTER VI

THE DIVINE GRACE

Whatever one wants sincerely and persistently from the Divine, the Divine is sure to give.

Few are those from whom the Grace withdraws, but many are those who withdraw from the Grace.

Sri Aurobindo

Continue to have full faith in the divine Grace, Will and Action and all will be all right.

The Mother

The ultimate aim of the Purna Yoga is supramental change of the human nature. To attain this supreme object, the sadhak must, at every stage of the sadhana, rely chiefly upon the Guru and the Grace of God. The sadhana really begins, when one depends upon the Divine Power and Protection for making progress or getting a realisation. Certain paths of Yoga such as the pure Adwaitic or monistic and the Buddhist say that the sadhak must trust to his own powers without waiting upon the Guru or depending upon the Grace. But other paths rely upon both the Guru and the Grace as indispensable aids in sadhana. "Strength", says Sri Aurobindo,

"if it is spiritual, is a power for spiritual realisation; a greater power is sincerity; the greatest power of all is Grace."

The aid of the Guru is essential to the disciple specially in the early stages of the sadhana. He is the representative of the Divine upon the earth, the channel through which the Divine pours his influence upon the disciple. To the beginner his knowledge and experience are of immense value. One must follow the Guru, because he knows the way and can offer help in a difficulty. When one practises yoga according to one's own ideas, the chances are that he will never reach the goal. For an aspirant the protection and guidance of the Guru are necessary to avoid the pitfalls and dangers on the way. The Guru works as the instrument through whose medium the Grace descends normally upon the sadhaka.

The disciple can gain the essential things even from a guru of inferior abilities provided he sees in him the Grace of God and opens himself to his influence. He must have confidence in the Guru and sincerely follow his advice and guidance in a spirit of surrender. Then the deficiencies of the Guru will not matter and the disciple will get some real spiritual benefit from him. The guidance of the Guru is indispensable for one who would pursue the difficult

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^{1.} On Yoga II, Tome One, p. 588

and complex way of the Purna Yoga. Sri Aurobindo stresses the point in the following words: "It is idle for any one to expect that he can follow this road far,—much less to go to the end by his own inner strength and knowledge without the true aid or influence. Even the ordinary long-practised Yogas are hard to follow without the aid of the Guru; in this which as it advances goes through untrodden countries and unknown entangled regions, it is quite impossible."

The choice of a human Guru however is not imperative in all cases and for all persons. One may take to any of the Paths enunciated in the scriptures and follow with faith the course directed in them. Or one may rely on and trust to the inner Guide, the World-Teacher, Jagad-guru, secret within the heart. He is the Master of the Yoga without whose help and grace sadhana would not be possible. A little insight will reveal that a secret power is at work for our spiritual uplift. It will show how every little circumstance of our life has been so arranged as "to work out the imperfection and work in the perfection." God in his infinite love and wisdom is carrying on in us the work of the Yoga secretly from behind the veil.

When the sadhak advances on the path, he feels the guiding influence or the direct guidance of the

^{1.} The Riddle of This World, pp. 64-5

Divine. He feels an inward urge or pressure for progress coming from an inner Presence that directs all movements. The Grace may also reveal itself in a descent of the peace, power or light into any part of the being. The Mother says that the Divine Grace is eternally present and active, working everywhere and always; but few can receive it, retain it and utilise its gifts for spiritual progress. The Grace is there constantly seeking to help, but too often it is not allowed to do its supreme task of our conversion to divinity. Hence arises the absotule necessity of offering our will to the Divine Grace; for it is the Grace that accomplishes all.

The choice of the Grace may fall upon any person however apparently unworthy or undeserving. "It does not select the righteous and reject the sinner." It comes to the sinner as well as the saint reforming the one and leading the other from a merely moral to a spiritual life. It is superior to the Law of Karma and acts more potently than any other Power. The Grace will lead a man to the Diving, provided he wants the Divine absolutely and entirely with the whole heart. Sri Aurobindo says: "Grace is not an invention, it is a fact of spiritual experience. Many who would be considered as mere nothings by the wise and strong have attained by Grace. Illiterate, without mental power or training, without strength of character and will, they have

yet aspired and suddenly or rapidly grown into spiritual realisation, because they had faith or because they were sincere."

The Divine Grace often acts in a way which the human mind cannot understand. It is not bound by any condition that may be fixed by the human intellect. Yet ordinarily certain conditions appear as favourable to the manifestation of the Grace. The conditions of advent of the Grace are faith, call or prayer, aspiration and surrender. First of all, says the Mother, the sadhak should feel the need of the Grace—that is the most important thing. He must sincerely feel that he can know nothing and do nothing without the help and guidance of the Divine. This sense of helplessness comes most vividly when one feels a difficulty, inner or outer, where self-effort becomes of no avail. Then a call comes from the heart for help from above and one prays for the intervention of a superior power. One can pray for anything that one needs whether material or spiritual. But one must have faith in the Power, a faith that it can bring about the much needed release. An intense prayer with a sincere faith behind is a mighty force that will certainly bring a response from the Divine. Then the prayer is fulfilled by a miracle that passes all understanding.

^{1.} On Yoga II Tome One, p. 588

Sri Aurobindo says that faith in the Divine, in the Divine Grace, in the Path and the Guru and in the truth of the sadhana is necessary and indispensable. Unless one has faith in these things there is no meaning in the Yoga. Along with the faith there must be the complete trust that the Divine Power can bring victory over dangers and difficulties in the sadhana. The sadhak in fact cannot achieve success by his own strength, his own sadhana, his own tapasya: he must offer himself entirely into the hands of the Divine Mother for siddhi in the Integral Yoga, None can go through the difficulties and ordeals of the Yoga unless one has implicit faith and firm reliance upon God and his protecting power. Realisation comes not by one's own merit, virtue or capacity but by the action of the Divine Grace. One must have the happy confidence that one's prayer will be granted, one's aspiration will be fulfilled and everything will be all right. A simple childlike trust in the answer of the Grace to the heart's vearning is the most favourable condition of its descent.

The Mother says, "The divine Grace is always there to help those who have resolved to correct themselves and they cannot say, 'I am too weak to correct myself.' They should rather say that they have not yet taken the resolution to correct themselves. The Grace is there to give the supreme force to whosever takes the

resolution." If the sadhak can open himself to the Mother's Grace, it will surely come down to give the fruits of his sadhana. But if the mind or the vital holds back and refuses to admit the descending Light and Force, there will be failure in the sadhana. The Grace will act for us and help us in proportion to our trust and confidence. The more entire the faith and trust, the more rapidly will follow the result of the sadhana. To succeed in yoga one must not depend upon one's own power only, but try and develop a contact with the Divine and an openness⁺ to the Mother's Power and Presence.

Aspiration is another movement of the soul that has the power of bringing down the Grace. It is more intense, inward and one-pointed than prayer, though both are equally efficacious. One may aspire for an ideal or progress or purification or realisation of a truth. But the aspiration of the God-seeker must be free from all egoistic demands. 'All for the Divine and nothing for the ego'—that should be his motto. Not the least desire of personal profit or pleasure should be allowed to come between the Divine and one's aspiration. A sincere aspiration will bring about an opening to the Grace for utter fulfilment of the aspiration which will bring the much needed help and guidance.

^{1.} Bulletin, Pondicherry, August, '58

Nobody can transform himself by his own unaided effort. The Divine Force fulfilling the heart's psychic aspiration can alone achieve that difficult task. A sincere aspiration is a mighty soul force leaping up out of the psychic centre. It bursts forth like a flame and mounts upwards till it forms a contact with the Divine Grace. The being opens and the Grace descends to fulfil the object of aspiration. Surrender is surely the best way of opening, but lacking surrender, faith and aspiration can prepare for the descent of the Grace. As the psychic being has unquestioning faith and trust, a prayer or aspiration coming from the psychic centre is always fulfilled.

A movement of surrender to the Guru or the Divine Grace is the most efficacious way of calling down the Grace. The Mother says, "Let us give ourselves without reserve to the Divine, so best shall we receive the Divine Grace." A total surrender or consecration of oneself carries in it the power to remove quickly or slowly all obstacles on the way. Surrender is indeed the highest secret of the Integral Yoga. It means a self-offering of the entire being to the Divine, a constant obedience to its control and guidance. But surrender like the aspiration must be sincere and free from all personal demand and desire. One must give oneself completely without making any condition or retaining

^{1.} Words of the Mother, p. 20

anything for the ego which must abnegate itself in an utter surrender to the Divine.

The Grace will recede, if the surrender be made a cover for one's selfish desires, egoistic demands or vital satisfactions. One should seek for nothing but the realisation of the Divine Truth in oneself, in the sadhakas around and in the world outside. When the surrender is complete the Divine Power takes up the sadhana. It takes possession of life, mind and body and transforms them by its working into perfect channels of divine manifestation. "In proportion as the surrender and self-consecration progress the Sadhaka becomes conscious of the Divine Shakti doing the sadhana, pouring into him more and more of herself, founding in him the freedom and perfection of the Divine Nature. The more this conscious process replaces his own effort, the more rapid and true becomes his progress."1

At every crucial stage in the sadhana, the operation of the Grace is necessary to effect the results that cannot be attained by human effort alone. Sri Aurobindo says, "No sadhak can reach the supermind by his own efforts and the effort to do it by personal tapasya has been the source of many mishaps. One has to go quietly stage by stage until the being is ready and even then it is only the Grace that can bring the real supramental

^{1.} The Mother 'p. 13

change." But before the Grace can act, the being must be ready for its action. The recipient must have 'a state of grace'—an inner opening, a power of reception-for the advent of the Grace. This state is the slow result of a long preparation on the part of the recipient either in the present or in his past life. It is true that the Divine Grace often comes to those who have not prepared themselves and do not seem to be ready. Yet its action is not like that of magic altogether without any reason or process. The being must respond to the call and open itself until it becomes ready for the descent of the Divine Grace. Often a long discipline of tapasya or purification of the nature is required for its action. The mind and vital often resist and try to prolong their own reign and must be made willing to accept the Mother's help and Grace. Personal effort is necessary to prepare the being, to make it pure, plastic and strong enough to receive and contain the influx of the Divine Grace.

Human effort is necessary not only before the advent of the Grace but also after its manifestation. A constant endeavour must be made to receive and retain the rich gifts of the Divine Grace. For the Grace will not abide in a human vessel full of obscurity and falsehood that contradict its light and truth. The demand made upon us is a ceaseless discipline of aspi-

^{1.} More Lights on Yoga, pp. 10-P1

ration, rejection and surrender. The seeker's aspiration must be awake and answer to the Grace when it comes, otherwise no spiritual progress is possible. There must also be a constant and integral rejection of all impurities that are foreign to its presence in the adhar, the containing human system. The recipient should accept the incoming truth and reject all falsehood of the lower nature. Surrender is an essential condition of the Grace, but it must not be tamasic resignation and indolence. The Grace will act more rapidly and victoriously, when the whole being supports its action and co-operates in its supreme task of transformation of the nature. Sri Aurobindo says, "I have always seen that there has been really a long unobserved preparation before the Grace intervenes, and also, after it has intervened, one has still to put in a good deal of work to keep and develop what one has got-as it is in all other things until there is the complete siddhi. Then of course labour is finished and one is in assured possession. So tapasya of one kind or another is not avoidable."1

Thus we see that for a Yoga of transformation Grace and personal effort are equally important. Still, the Divine Grace appears to be the principal, nay the the only means of progress in the Supramental Yoga. A complete reliance on the Grace from the very beginning to the end is necessary for the siddhi of the

^{1.} On Yoga II Tome One, p. 589

Yoga. The first call to the Path, the soul's turning to the Divine, is itself an act of the Grace. Sri Aurobindo says, "He who chooses the Infinite has been chosen by the Infinite. He has received the divine touch without which there is no awakening, no opening of the spirit." It is the Grace that kindles the fire of aspiration and guides and fortifies our endeavour for self-consecration. The Influence always working from behind the veil helps to bring about the purification of nature and an opening in one form or another.

The Mother's Grace is indispensable for the conquest of the lower nature and its final transformation into the divine nature. The sadhak has indeed to reject everything that stands in the way of fulfilment—all impurities of the mental, vital and physical being. But rejection by personal effort is difficult and it takes a long time. One has to call in again the Divine Power to support the personal effort and give the power of rejection. A better way however is to get the habit of silent reliance upon the power of the Mother and to feel it working within the being. This will progressively lessen and finally remove all difficulties and obstacles. So Sri Arabindo says, "The principal thing in the Yoga is to trust in the Divine Grace at every step, to direct the thought continually to the Divine and to offer oneself till the being opens and the Mother's force can be felt working in the Adhara."2

^{1.} The Synthesis of Yoga, pp. 59-60

^{2.} Bases of Yoga, p. 39

CHAPTER VII

ASCENDING FLAMES

Souls that do not aspire are God's failures.

A quieted mind and a persistent aspiration in the heart are the two main keys of the Yoga.

Sri Aurobindo

With patience and perseverance all prayers get fulfilled.

The Mother

Prayer and aspiration are like two luminous flames that ascend upwards from the inmost soul to Heaven above. These two psychic powers, as stated in the previous chapter, can bring down the Divine Grace from above to fulfil the object of the sadhana. Aspiration by its intense will power can rend the veil that hides God from man; prayer brings him into touch with the Divine, who grants the object of his desire. A further knowledge is therefore necessary of these two primary yet. most powerful movements of the soul in its ascent towards the Kingdom of Heaven.

The Mother says that two keys can open the door to the Divine, namely, (1) a sufficiently sincere aspiration and (2) a sufficiently intense prayer. People choose the one or the other according to the bent of

their mind. Intellectual people prefer aspiration regarding it as superior to prayer; but sometimes it is pride or vanity that shuts their heart against prayer. The devotees, on the other hand, think that prayer is necessary for fulfilment of the aspiration, which has less efficacy. "But in both there is magic power and one must know how to use them," says the Mother.

Both prayer and aspiration are intrinsically a power of being directed towards an object and both can be effective means of gaining an end. What supports them both is a faith in the inmost soul. Prayer holds to faith in a personal God, it is always addressed to a divine being; aspiration is moved by faith in some good or ideal as an object of realisation. But there are striking differences also. Prayer is always formed of words and directed towards a person, but aspiration need not be towards any person or always expressed in word. Prayer generally seeks for an external object, it has often a touch of egoism. But of aspiration the Mother says, "It is something much more intimate, much more self-forgetful, living only in the object it wishes to be or to do, almost identified with it."1 Nevertheless are prayers so spontaneous and so disinterested that they reach the border of aspiration. For these prayers that are made of faith, sincerity and simple

^{1.} The Yoga of Sri Aurobindo, Part VII, p. 108

trust have always an effective power for a psychic opening or a spiritual contact.

Man has many needs and wants and therefore many desires; his life is full of toil, sorrow and suffering. So he approaches a higher Power through prayer for fulfilment of his desires, for help and protection in his difficulty. Such prayers may seem not only childish but also superfluous and ineffective. For the Divine, it may seem, can foresee the thing to be done and cannot be turned aside from its purpose by anybody's desires and entreaties. Still prayer has a real power and significance. For prayer puts the human faith, will and aspiration into touch with the Divine Will which does respond and bring fruition of the prayer. Moreover by prayer we enter into conscious and living relations with the Divine, which has a high spiritual significance. The relations formed with the Divine out of a prayerful attitude are those of the Divine Father and the Mother with the child or of the Divine Friend or the Lover and Beloved. Any such relation or contact and interchange with God is a great soul power for spiritual growth and experience.

On the lower plane, the prayer may be made of demands for satisfaction of egoistic aims. But afterwards the object of the prayer becomes higher and higher such as prayer for spiritual progress, for benefit of other people, for union with and service of the Divine. Then the stress falls upon the spiritual

truth behind the prayer, upon the contact and relation with the Divine. At length prayer ceases in a pure and simple devotion to the Divine without any demand or longing. The Bhakta does not desire for any other object but that his love may be eternal and absolute. Thus prayer ends in motiveless love, where all idea of giving and taking disappears altogether. This is the very essence of Yoga, which means utter selfless union with the Divine. Prayer on the spiritual plane or psychic prayer is thus a great power for progress and realisation.

Aspiration is a soul force directed towards a goal. It is a tense upward movement of the being shooting up like a flame towards its object. A spiritual aspiration such as one for a state of consciousness, a knowledge, a realisation comes from the psychic centre. That is the chief centre from which it spreads to other parts of the being. In that case an aspiration may be mental, vital or physical; it may come from the refined mind or purified vital or sublimated physical being. It is important for the Purna Yoga that every part should open itself to the influence of the psychic and aspire for the Divine or its Light, Power, Peace or Ananda. Each part should consent to give up its petty rounds of pleasures and satisfactions and live exclusively for the Divine. An aspiration spreading over the whole being is a most efficacious way of calling down the Divine Grace, which is an essentia power for

integral liberation and complete union with the Divine.

The Purna Yoga stands for liberation of: the soul as well as the nature. A static union of the soul with the Divine leaving the lower parts unreformed belongs to an outworn creed. The sadhak should aspire for a union in all parts of the being down to the very cells of the body. Not merely the inner consciousness should be full of the Divine, but all the outer activities-every thought, feeling, willing, sensation-should be perceived as coming from the Divine. The sadhak should aspire for this highest ideal right from the beginning. For a total aspiration is a condition of such total union and liberation. Sri Aurobindo therefore says that the greatest power making the shortest way to the Divine is "a psychic aspiration manifesting through the heart and communicating itself to the mental and vital and physical consciousness."1

The lower parts do not easily open to the light and power of the higher consciousness. They prefer a living in the ego to a life in the Divine. Specially the body being dull, inert and insensitive refuses all light and urge for a change. But how to get rid of the opposition of the lower parts? The Mother advises us to bring the Light into the lower parts by means of the higher parts. The intellect should convince the

^{1.} On Yoga II, Tome One, p. 489

former of the futility of their low self-seeking desires and movements. The intuition and aspiration of the psychic should be poured and imposed upon the mind, vital and body. This process should be carried on persistently till the lower members begin to aspire and turn spontaneously to the truth. A contact with the psychic being is sufficient to keep alive in them the flame of aspiration for the higher consciousness or the higher truth to be realised. The aspiration from the lower being is indeed a powerful lever for our uplift from the ordinary lower to a higher level of consciousness.

But the method of transformation is one of persuasion, not coercion of the inferior being by the superior. One should treat the unruly parts as erring children and try to correct them with gentleness but firmness. For the lower parts also have an innate longing for a divine life proceeding from the involved spirit within The sadhana only evolves what is already involved. The Mother says that the process is like bringing a light into a dark room—it simply dispels the darkness. The whole being should be thrown wide open so that the Light may enter freely and work fully for its purification and perfection. There should not be the least concealment or suppression of any defect or falsehood anywhere in the nature. Such entire opening in full sincerity will bring the right consciousness into all the parts. The whole being will then come to accept the truth, rejecting all that is false and undivine. A persistent practice will wean even the physical from its low love of ordinary things and fill it with an aspiration and love for the Divine. The Mother says that when the physical being turns towards the Divine, one's entire life will be changed—the experience is unmistakable.

The aspiration should be intense but free from impatience. It must be quiet, peaceful and free from excessive eagerness. "Aspire to realisation, but do not be over-eager," says Sri Aurobindo. Many people fall into dullnes, despair or depression, if their aspiration is not promptly fulfilled. All these things should be dismissed immediately, for their causes are unreal being based upon false vital suggestions. The sadhak must have a child-like trust, a firm conviction that his aspiration will surely be fulfilled. A strong aspiration supported by implicit faith will call down the divine help or the Mother's force and bring about some realisation.

Above all, the aspiration must be sincere and free from all egoistic demands and desires. The Mother says, "You must be sincere in your aspiration, you need not even know that you are aspiring: you should become the aspiration. When you can do that, you feel an extraordinary strength. One minute of such an experience prepares you for years of progress." The

^{1.} The Yoga if Sri Aurobindo, Part VIII, p. 108

sadhaka should have no personal aspiration, no personal desire, no egoistic will, or motive of vital satisfaction. The aspiration should be free from all kinds of low or wrong movements, as these spoil its power of realisation. One's only object should be union with the Divine and His expression in oneself and in other aspirants. A sincere one-pointed aspiration by bringing down the Divine Grace and Protection will confer every siddhi on the sadhaka.

A word of caution is also necessary here, Aspiration like a delicate sapling has to be tended with care and vigilance. It has to be protected from the chill blasts of doubt and disbelief. The world is full of forces inimical to the sustenance of this offspring of the soul. The silliness and frivolity of the modern society tend to dissipate or destroy its purity and intensity, sadhaka should, therefore, be exceedingly careful about his company and environment. He should, as far as possible, keep away from all persons, influences or surroundings that are hurtful to his aspiration. Numberless vibrations are constantly pouring into us from all kinds of movement and all kinds of people. It is extremely difficult always to remain on one's guard amidst so much pollution. The Mother advises us to create around us a spiritual atmosphere of sincere aspiration and surrender. That will give automatic protection against all injurious infection. The baneful forces lose their power for evil and injury when they enter or pass through this purificatory envolope.

CHAPTER VIII

FOUNDATIONS OF YOGA

Faith fights for God, while knowledge is waiting for fulfilment, and so long as the latter is withheld, the former is necessary.

A quiet mind and a quiet vital are the first condition for success in sadhana.

Equanimity and peace in all conditions, in all parts of the being is the first foundation, of the Yogic status.

Sri Aurobindo

In peace and inner silence you will more and more become conscious of the constant Presence.

The Mother

Certain qualities such as faith, quietude, sincerity, etc. are regarded as basic requisites for all spiritual progress. The sadhaka should acquire these essential virtues, as they are the first condition for entering on the path of Yoga. All of them denote psychological states that dispose and prepare the mind for getting spiritual experience. The Integral Yoga prescribes certain effortful practices for the attainment of these qualities or movements that make for siddhi in the Yoga. All of them are helpful for getting rid of

mental or vital oppositions and disturbances that prevent our opening to the true conciousness. Anything that disturbs us e.g. fear, anger, greed, lust, hatred, jealousy is a wrong movement which can be countered by the cultivation of certain spiritual virtues that prevent its occurrence. Hence we shall explain here the nature of these essential qualities or capacities together with the disciplines required for their attainment in order that the aspirant may properly qualify himself for a systematic practice of the Integral Yoga.

A. Faith-Faith is 'a certitude in the soul', a belief in some truth that does not depend on reason or experience. It is not a mental belief, but "something spiritual, a knowledge of the soul," It is a call or influence from the Supreme Spirit accepted by the inner soul. When the whole being assents to the truth seen by it or offered to its acceptance, the faith becomes perfect. A faith supported by the mind, heart and life-mind is an irresistible force for realisation. A 'soul faith' is indispensable for success in spiritual as in ordinary life. Without this essential thing, a man's faith in himself, his powers and ideas, nobody can make any progress whether material or spiritual, Belief in the Divine Grace or Divine Power will bring all rich and boundless perfections of the Spirit. Also it will ensure protection against all dangers and difficulties and apparent failures.

But faith to be effective must not be a tamasic and inert dependence upon God. It should be 'a dynamic confidence' in the victory of the Divine and his power. The tamasic idea is this: "I need not exert myself. When the Mother wants, she will transform me. Let the Mother take charge and do everything for me." The right position should be, "Let me do what I can; the Mother's force is there, the Divine is there to see that in due time all will be done."1 Faith of the right kind is necessary throughout at every step of the Yoga, because it is the needed assent of the soul without which there can be no progress. We must have an abiding soul faith in the essential principle, ideas and way of the Yoga; otherwise we may fall on the path or abandon it from weakness or inability to bear temporary defeat, difficulty and peril. Even a blind and ignorant faith is a better possession at the outset than the sceptical doubt and disbelief, although blindness prevents our advance to greater reaches of truth and perfection.

Moreover, we must have faith in our own spiritual will and energy and our capacity to win unity, freedom and perfection. All impotent self-distrust, all disabling doubt, all imagination of weakness must be discouraged and abandoned. Such disturbing thoughts and feelings are altogether without reason; for power is latent in

^{1.} Letters of Sfi Aurobindo on the Mother, p. 187

our own spirit, and the Divine Grace is always ready to give help and power and victory. "The strength is there—even in the weakest; one has to find it, to unveil it and to keep it in front throughout the journey and the battle." Reliance on the Divine Grace is a sure means of gaining courage, strength and confidence. The sadhak must not be upset or pained or discouraged by difficulties or failures, but call tranquilly and persistently for the divine help for their removal. The power of the Shakti is illimitable and, when rightly called upon, will pour itself into us to remove all incapacity, weakness and obstacles on the way to our ultimate victory.

The Purna Yoga requires faith in the Divine and his Shakti as an indispensable condition of its fulfilment. But this psychic faith must enter into every part of the being and influence all our thoughts, feelings and actions. When the faith comes down into the mental, vital and physical parts, then it becomes integral. The whole being in all its parts becomes aware of the presence and submits to the guidance and governance of the Divine Shakti. The seeker must fully believe that the Shakti can confer victory over the lower nature and liberation and perfection; in her hands lie all knowledge, all strength, all victory and triumph. This faith in Shakti is perfected when we intimately

^{1.} Letters, Vol. IV, p. 295

feel her presence in the heart, her powers working in ourselves and the whole being assents to her workings. "The intimate feeling of her presence and her powers and the satisfied assent of all our being to her workings in and around it is the last perfection of faith in the Shakti."

But faith in the Ishwara standing behind the Shakti is "the most central thing in the sraddha (complete mental faith) of the integral Yoga." One must have the faith that the Divine exists and He is the only object to be sought after in life. He who has this fundamental faith will achieve success in the spiritual life in spite of all the defects, denials and difficulties in his nature. One must believe that all things or happenings in us or around us are the working of a supreme Wisdom and Will. The Divine is leading us through our successes as well as falls and failures to the goal of our endeavour. He is the Master of the Yoga in whose hand lies the fruition of all our yoga and perfection.

The sadhaka must have the confidence that the Divine is guiding and leading him through every circumstance to the final victory in spite of all opposition from our ignorant nature or the hostile forces. Such an unshaken faith can achieve miracles; it can make the impossible possible; it will support

^{1.} The Syn hesis of Yoga, pp. 892-8

one through the changes, struggles and perils that may come in course of the sadhana. This faith in God is completed by the feeling of the presence of the Ishwara in our consciousness and in all our movements, all thoughts, feelings and actions. Sri Aurobindo says, "Faith, reliance upon God, surrender and self-giving to the Divine Power are necessary and indispensable."

B. Quiet and Calm-The first thing needed for sadhana is calm and quiet. Yoga is impossible if the mind is restless. A mind that is tossed about by restless and unruly thoughts, by vital desires and passions and by impulses of the body is unfit for yogic practices. But quietness does not mean absence of all thought or mental or vital movement. By a quiet mind Sri Aurobindo means "a mind free from disturbance and trouble, steady, light and glad so as to open to the Force that will change the nature." We have quietude, achanchalata, when the mind and vital are free from constant restlessness, over-activity or trouble that keeps them in a state of ceaseless agitation. This absence of habitual disturbance is the first step in the sadhana, although it is a more or less negative condition.

The next sten is calm, sthirata, which is a more

^{1.} On Yoga, II, Tome One, p. 558

^{2.} Ibid, p. 614

positive condition. Calm is 'a still unmoved condition' which is not affected by any movement on the surface. This denotes a strong and firm quietude that can exist in spite of superficial disturbances. "The mind is said to be calm when thoughts, feelings, etc., may pass through it, but it is not disturbed. It feels that the thoughts are not its own; it observes them perhaps, but it is not perturbed by anything."1 Here disturbances may come and go, but the mind always remains tranquil and unaffected in spite of any distracting movements. A yet more positive condition is peace, shanti, which carries with it a sense of settled and harmonious rest, a feeling of liberation and full satisfaction. Peace is a calm deepened into a secure quietude where no disturbance can come. Besides the feeling of peace brings "not merely a release as calm does but a certain happiness or Ananda of itself."

Quietude, calm and peace in the mind and therefore in the vital are the indispensable first condition of success in the Yoga. For without these essential requisites the initial Yogic movement of concentration of mind cannot be possible. The sadhak must remain and grow always more and more deeply quiet, still and peaceful in himself and in his attitude to the world around him. Then he is likely to go on progressing in the sadhana with a minimum of trouble

^{1.} Elements of Yoga, p. 15

and disturbance. The being cannot open to the Force, if it is disturbed by troubling thoughts, wrong feelings and unhappy movements. Peace, Light or Ananda cannot be intense or abiding unless the mind be calm, quiet and free from ordinary joy and sorrow. These things can descend from above only on the solid basis of calm or silence in the consciousness. Bhakti and Ananda can be abiding only on the stable foundation of a spiritual calm and peace. The whole being must be calm and free from all disturbing thoughts, feelings, impulses and agitations. Sri Aurobindo says, "Remember first that an inner quietude caused by the purification of the restless mind and vital, is the first condition of a secure sadhana."

Man being a mental creature finds it extremely difficult to control the activities of the mind. But this he can do by separating the two parts of the mind, the active part busy with the thoughts and the quiet masterful part, "the Master in the House of Mind." The latter called mental Purusha is capable of standing apart and observing and judging the nature part of the mind. The Purusha stands back and watches its own activities as a witness, but takes no interest in them, as if they were foreigners with whom one has no concern. By such detachment, the mind remains calm, quiet and unmoved amidst all disturbances of the

^{1.} On Yoga II, Tome One, p. 616

nature. Then by the exercise of its will power, the Purusha in the mind becomes the master; it rejects, eliminates, accepts and guides and controls the mental movements. To struggle with the mind to make it queit is not of much use; this standing back, detaching oneself is the easier way of getting control and freedom.

But the above discipline brings only a partial and precarious calm and control of the mind. The Yogi is capable of a further movement. He gets out of the mind, as it were, stands above or quite back from it and free from this circle of thought. He perceives that thoughts or impulses enter into the mind as waves from the outside, the universal Mind or Universal Nature. The mind observes them from a distance or does not care to observe them. But in either case it does not identify itself with them or call them its own; nor does it become active or lose the quietude. Then the disturbances come but pass away like wayfarers through a silent land and leave no trace behind. The Mother says that the quiet mind obtained through meditation passes away as soon as one comes out from the meditation. The true lasting quietude in all the parts-mental, vital and physical-results from a complete self-giving to the Divine. For, when a man consecrates himself wholly, the Divine takes up the entire charge of his welfare and satisfies all the needs of his inner and outer being, vogakshema, so

that he need not have any worry or anxiety about anything.

True calm or peace comes from two spiritual experiences. One is the Vedantic experience of the Self or Atman which stands in a supreme poise of calm and stability above the cosmic movement. The self is for ever detached from all activities of Nature-the nature in the world outside as well as inside our own being, its thoughts, emotions and sensations. Hence to realise the Self is to be firmly established in an immutable calm that nothing can disturb. The other experience is that of the psychic being, the soul in us that is entirely free from ego and desire, the root of all disturbance. The psychic is wholly dedicated to the Divine Person and accepts everything as the all-wise will of the supreme Lord of the universe. Besides it has an inherent happiness, a self-existent joy that takes delight in the cosmic manifestation as the Lila or play of the Divine. Therefore this realisation brings a strong peace and equality that surpasses and supersedes all perturbing reactions of nature.

C. Wideness—But the consciousness must become not only calm but also wide. It should be felt as spreading out and enveloping everything so that one may dwell in it. Wideness is a sign of the extension of the consciousness out of the ordinary limits. "In Yoga experience the consciousness widens in every direction, around, below, above, in each direction

stretching to infinity." The ordinary consciousness in each person is narrow and shut up in the mind, life and body. It sees itself as the centre of everything and does not know the truth of anything. But when by yoga the true consciousness which is that of the Self or Atman comes, then the barrier begins to break down. The mind, the vital and even the physical consciousness grow wider and wider until one feels the whole universe within oneself.

The wideness of consciousness which results from the realisation of the self within or above the being is of utmost importance in the yoga. This wideness will help the calm and peace to be stable even amidst activity. The limiting ego sense which is the root cause of all evil, will disappear on entering into the cosmic vastness. A wideness of being is the secure foundation of the permanence of all higher spiritual experience. A 'wide calm' occupying the whole body is the much needed basis of its transformation. The physical consciousnesscannot be transformed unless the calm wideness fills the very body and all its cells. When the consciousness is in a state of wideness, it can receive any amount of force without inconvenience. "The wider your consciousness becomes, the more you will be able to receive from above. The Shakti will be able to descend and bring strength and light as well as peace into the system."2

^{1.} On Yoga II, Tome Two, p. 184

^{2.} Ibid, Tonle One, p. 686

D. Silence—Silence, nischala niravata, is a higher state of consciousness than calm or quietude and belongs to a higher stage of yoga. "Silence is a state in which either there is no movement of the mind or vital or else a great stillness which no surface movement can pierce or alter." The mind is either altogether free from thoughts, desires or impulses or these are felt as surface movements that cannot touch the inner peace or calm. Complete silence can be gained by banishing thought altogether from the inner mind, keeping it vacant and voiceless. The ordinary mind is never silent; the silent mind is a result of yoga.

The state of silence comes by the practice of a silent concentration in the inner being or Purusha. This Yogic discipline leads to a division in the being; the inner self or Purusha is silent and watches, while the outer nature is the field of all active movements. The former is then felt as something separate from and unaffected by the activities of the outer nature. The agitations of the mind and vital are regarded as surface movements which do not disturb the inner calm and silence. Afterwards one has to proceed to silence or quiet the Prakriti or external nature. This can be done by the help of the will in the Purusha, who has the native power of rule or mastery over the nature. This Rajayogic discipline

^{1.} On Yoga II, Tome One, p. 619

of separation of the Purusha from the Prakriti is a most helpful practice for establishing peace and silence in the entire consciousness.

But silence like peace is more easily established by a descent from a higher consciousness in which silence is an inherent state unaffected by any movement. The descent may come as a result of a calm and deep aspiration or as an act of grace of the Divine. One has to open the mind upward lifting the consciousness out of the body and call calmly and steadily for peace and silence of the higher self above. These things will then descend first into the mind and then into the lower planes, even into the very body. At the time of meditation the sadhak must not fight with the mind. or make mental efforts to pull down the Peace or Silence. He should remain quiet, "keeping only a silent will and aspiration for them". In case the mind is active, he should draw back from and refuse to give sanction to the disturbing thoughts. The intruders will then clear out for want of support from within the mind itself. The best way however is a steady rejection without strain or struggle by the help of the silent will which is the will of the Purusha behind the mind. This method is also the way to call down the higher powers, such as Light, Force or Ananda from the higher regions above.

But instead of lifting the consciousness upwards and making a strain, one may open the being and let things

flow in by remaining quiet and indrawn. One has only to withdraw and sink down below the surface being or get behind all outer appearance to contact the Truth within. By turning the sense and vision from the outside inward we become aware of the true Self or Spirit within our being. Again by plunging them also inward through the surface of the outward nature, through the veils of Name and Form, we become aware of the same Self and Spirit in the external world and its phenomena. By either of these two practices, the mind and the vital will open and get connected with a higher consciousness, which is really the consciousness of the Divine, the Mother. Then the mind will fall gradually quiet or silent of itself or else peace and silence will begin to flow in from outside or above.

By the above yogic process not only the mind but the whole being may be filled with absolute silence. Indeed the calm, peace or silence must permeate the whole being in order to be complete. They should not merely touch the upper mind but take possession of the entire mind, life and body. One must feel any of these as a fixed state of consciousness, "as something standing behind and containing all the movements." The inner calm or silence may be maintained even while one is engaged in a work, whether mental or physical. For this it is necessary to remain quiet and indrawn without throwing oneself out in

activity—that means a silent concentration. By this practice, "there is created gradually a faculty of double thought or else a double consciousness", one in front doing the work and the other behind watching as a witness. The surface consciousness is occupied, but the inner being remains silent and observing or turned towards the Divine. All the necessary initiations and execution of work whether mental, vital or physical, come from a higher Power without disturbing the fundamental peace and silence.

Silence or calm may at first appear as a negative thing, an empty quietude. But, in fact, silence is the positive basis of the divine consciousness that is to replace the ordinary restless and troubled human consciousness. "It is in the silent mind that the true consciousness can be built." Silence brings true knowledge or true thoughts that have the power to realise themselves. It brings liberation of the spirit and leads sometimes to the Cosmic Consciousness and sometimes to the Silent Self spread out in its vastness everywhere. A 'receptive silence' may also open the being to any consciousness higher than the mental or to the peace, presence or power of the Divine. Sri Aurobindo says that in this Yoga it is the most favourable condition for the descent of Divine Power

^{1.} On Yoga II, Tome Or.e, p. 613

for the work of transformation of the individual consciousness.

E. Sincerity—Sincerity is the one indispensable condition of success in the sadhana. "Sincerity is the key of the divine doors," says the Mother. To be sincere means to have the sole aspiration of finding the Divine giving up all personal demand or desire. Usually some vital demand is mixed with our sadhana for the Divine. Many do Yoga for personal reasons: "some because they are disgusted with life, others because they are unhappy, some others because they wish to have more knowledge, others again because they want to be spiritually great, yet others because they want to learn things so that they may teach them to others, and so on, there are a thousand personal reasons to do the Yoga." 1

The desire for Peace, Knowledge, Ananda or any other aspect of the Divine often contains an egoistic element. Many seek for liberation or personal progress or perfection instead of making complete surrender of their being. Such vital desire must change into a motive of the soul. 'Divine for Divine's sake': 'I seek you for you'—that should be the motto of the sadhaka. He should ask for nothing but the fulfilment of the Divine Will in and through him. Sri Aurobindo says, "To be entirely sincere means to

^{1.} The Yoga of Sri Aurobindo, Part VIII, pp. 6-7

desire the divine Truth only, to surrender yourself more and more to the Divine Mother, to reject all personal demand and desire other than this one aspiration, to offer every action in life to the Divine and do it as the work given without bringing in the ego. This is the basis of the divine life."

Sincerity is not easy to acquire. There must be a complete opening of the being to the Divine. Sri Aurobindo says that a central sincerity-a firm central will for the realisation—is not enough except as a beginning and a base; the sincerity must spread through the whole nature. "The central sincerity is the first thing and sufficient for an aspiration to be entertained a total sincerity is needed for the aspiration to be fulfilled."2 Every movement of the being every thought, every feeling, every impulse-should flow towards the Divine as the river towards the sea. That means surrender of the whole being in all its parts. All the elements from the highest to the lowest must learn to give up their own will and desires to the will of the Divine. Every least part of the being should willingly obey and joyfully submit to the Divine Will without any revolt, reservation or dissatisfaction. But for the human nature such integral turning towards the Truth is the most difficult of achievement. Only

^{1.} Bases of Yogg, p. 33

^{2.} On Yoga II, Tome Two, p. 101

the psychic being and the one-pointed spiritual aspiration can give this complete harmonised sincerity.

Complete sincerity demands that even the very cells of the physical body should aspire for the Divine. The Mother says that one may become sincere at moments or in a part or on the whole. One may also attain sincerity in one's psychic movements, though that is a rare thing. But to be sincere in the very cells of the physical being is a still rare and more difficult achievement. "To make the body cells so one-pointed that they too feel that they cannot live but for the Divine and in and through the Divine. That is the true sincerity and that is what you must have." All the parts of the being, even the most minute, must be turned consciously towards the Divine as the sole motive of their existence. One has to discover the unruly part, to insist upon the change, to train it by the higher parts and pray for help, if necessary, until the part is fully converted to the Divine. Not the least egoistic desire or demand should be allowed to taint or spoil the purity or sincerity of our aspiration. The ego should completely disappear from every part in a perfect self-consecration to the Divine. Then the Divine Grace will remove all errors and difficulties and one will go straight to the goal along a sunlit way.

^{1.} The Yoga of Sri Aurobindo, Part VII

Equality_Sri Aurobindo says, "There can be no firm foundation in sadhana without equality, samata."1 Equality in its primary sense means freedom from all vital and mental preferences and desires and trouble in the entire nature. The word also implies acceptance of all God's workings within and around ourselves with undisturbed calm in the mind and spirit. The sadhak must be on the watch and by the will power of the mind or the spirit repel even the least incidence of trouble, anxiety, grief, fear, revolt, all agitations of the mind. Equality may be physical, vital or Physical equality means a sound body capable of bearing shocks and impacts without nervous fear, shrinking and agitation. Vital equality means mastery over vital movements, desire, anger, pride, passion and the rest that disturb the inner peace. "It is the power to bear the impact of things good or bad, without being grieved or elated, discouraged or enthused, without any upsetting or disturbance."2

The core of vital equality is a poise of calm and peace in the vital that remains always unshaken. Whatever happens, however grievous the acts or words of people, they do not touch or disturb one's inner peace. Speech and act proceed from inner calm, not from emotion and impulse. The emotional being

^{1.} On Yoga II, Tome One, p. 642

^{2.} The Yoga of Sri Aurobindo, Part VII, p. 111

remains serene and peaceful in all circumstances. Mental equality means the capacity for calm reflection and judgment of all ideas or opinions coming from any source whatsoever. It also means to look upon all things and people with a calm and clear vision, seeing and judging men and their acts without bias or personal feeling. Sri Aurobindo says, "A condition of perfect samata can be established in which one sees all as equal, friends and enemies included, and is not disturbed by what men do or by what happens." 1

There can be no spiritual progress without this solid basis of equality in the outer nature. Always one must remain calm, untouched and unmoved amidst all happenings however unpleasant or disagreeable. Sri Aurobindo says, "It is easy to be calm and equal, when things go well and people and circumstances are pleasant; it is when they are the opposite that the completeness of the calm, peace, equality can be tested, reinforced, made perfect." One supreme aim of the human perfection is freedom from—or at least a mastery of and superiority to the attacks and disturbances of the lower nature. But to attain such freedom and mastery a perfect equality in the entire being and nature is indispensable. A poise of equality in action is specially necessary for

^{1.} On Yoga II, Tome One, pp. 644-5

^{2.} Ibid, p. 612

the Integral Yoga. The perfected being must be an instrument of divine action; it must work for the fulfilment of the divine purpose in the world. But to be a perfect servant of the Divine, one must rise above the dualities of nature and be firmly founded in the freedom, peace and equality of the inner spirit. Equality is the condition of the being that makes possible divine action proceeding from inmost unity with the Divine Will. "A divine action or even a perfect human action is impossible, if we have not equality of spirit and an equality in the motive-forces of our nature."

But what are the conditions for the establishment of equality? One primary condition is the steady and persistent rejection of all egoistic, rajasic or other feelings that are opposed to the sadhana. The first obvious step is the conquest of the emotional and the vital being. For these two parts are the sources of the greatest trouble and the most serious inequality and imperfection. The vital desires, demands and disturbances must be controlled and governed by the exercise of the mental will or by inviting the higher will of the Purusha behind the mind to rid the nature of its defects. By a similar process or by awakening a psychic aspiration for the Divine, the heart also must be freed from all blind affections and stormy passions and made calm, equal, luminous, divine. The mind too

^{1.} The Synthesis of Yoga, p. 801

must get rid of all attachment to its partial preferences, ideas, opinions, judgments about all objects, all people, their nature and their actions. Lastly, the will instead of responding to the lower impulses must follow a higher direction coming from the psychic or the Divine Will.

The root of all imperfections is the ego sense, which must be annulled by full surrender of the being to the Divine. A complete self-giving is the only way by which absolute calm and peace can come and form the basis of unshaken equality. By surrender we come to recognise that everything comes by the divine will and learn to bear both joy and sorrow, success and failure with an equal spirit. A descent of calm and peace from above is however the most favourable condition for the establishment of equality. When these take hold of the vital and the body, then equanimity becomes easy and in the end automatic. But equality itself may descend like peace and calm by the soul's aspiration and the Mother's Grace. Sri Aurobindo says, "Complete samata takes long to establish and it is dependent on three things—the soul's self-giving to the Divine by an inner surrender, the descent of the spiritual calm and peace from above and the steady, long and persistent rejection of all egoistic, rajasic and other feelings that contradict samata."1

^{1.} On Yoga II, Tome One, p. 643

CHAPTER IX

THE SUPREME SECRET

Surrender denotes a free total giving of one's self to the Divine, to a greater consciousness of which the individual soul is a part.

Once you have taken up the Yoga, whatever you do must be done in a spirit of complete surrender.

The Mother

To give oneself is the secret of Sadhana, not to demand and acquire. The more one gives oneself, the more the power to receive will grow.

Sri Aurobindo

Surrender is the chief secret and 'the central process' of the Yoga. The Integral Yoga seeks to realise the Divine Truth not beyond but here in earthly life. For this purpose it is necessary to transform the mind, life and body. But transformation is not possible unless one opens and surrenders to the Divine Being and to the Divine Mother, the Supreme Shakti.* For

^{*}Of. "This Yoga insists on both the aspects: the surrender to the Divine Mother is essential, for without it there is no fulfilment of the object of the Yoga."—Letters of Fri Aurobindo on the Mother, page 25

the Shakti, the divine Consciousness-Force and World-Mother, is the mediatrix between the eternal One and the individual soul in the manifestation. To her belongs the power that can effectively lead us, human beings, to some absolute Light, Power, Bliss and Truth and the Supreme Lord beyond the cosmos. She works in us for the development of the Divine Consciousness and guides or leads us at every step so that the soul may here put on its divine character. She takes up all the movements of our being and directs them towards perfection and fulfilment, towards our highest good and greatest felicity. The chief method of the Yoga is therefore surrender to the Divine Being through the Divine Shakti whose power alone can re-create the human soul into the divine soul and the human nature into the divine nature.

Sri Aurobindo defines surrender thus: "Surrender is giving oneself to the Divine—to give everything one is or has to the Divine and regard nothing as one's own, to obey only the Divine Will and no other, to live for the Divine and not for the ego." The sadhak has to offer all of himself, all that he is and has and does to the Divine in a spirit of utter devotion and consecration. He must give himself entirely into the hands of the Divine without reserving anything for the ego and aspire for the Divine Truth as the sole

^{1.} On Yoga II, Tome One, pp. 562-3

object of his life. He must not demand or desire for anything, not even progress or realisation, but an opening to the Divine. Moreover, the sadhaka must have the faith that whatever happens he will meet and unite with the Divine through the action, whether veiled or manifest, of the Divine Grace. This means reliance upon the Grace rather than one's own effort for carrying on the Yoga.

A complete trust and confidence+ in the Divine power is indeed the main condition or rather the essence of the surrender. One corollary of this condition is that the sadhaka must accept whole-heartedly the incoming higher truth without any question or opposition. He must not insist on his personal ideas, desires, habits. etc., but allow the Divine Truth to guide and lead him by its knowledge, will and action everywhere. He should accept the knowledge from above in place of his own mental ideas, the will of the Divine in place of his vital desires, 'the movements of the Truth in place of his physical habits. This inward acceptance or consent to receive is what we mean by the inner surrender of the mind, the vital and the physical-being. But there is also the outer surrender. This means the giving up or rejection of all that conflicts with the spirit or need of the sadhana. It also implies obedience to the guidance of the Guru or of the Divine whether through the psychic or at a later stage by direct intervention:

Surrender denotes "a self-offering of the whole being in all its parts." All our nature should make an integral surrender; it must offer itself in every part and movement to Something that is beyond us and beyond our separating and limiting ego. "Our whole being-soul, mind, sense, heart, will, life, body-must consecrate all its energies so entirely and in such a way that it shall become a fit vehicle for the Divine."1 The soul drawing back from the lower nature must seek and find its fulfilment in the divine union. The mind constantly dwelling upon the Divine should find him as the Inhabitant in all beings, all things and all movements of Nature. The heart giving up its love of the world must approach him as the supreme Beloved and learn to love him in all creatures. On him the will must fix as the invisible Power that guides and fulfils and as the source of all its strength. All outer actions are to be resolved into a devoted offering to the adored Master of Works. who uses our life as his altar for the world-sacrifice. Even the body, throwing away its ingrained love of ease and comfort should become a willing servant that always obeys the dictates of the Spirit,

Such complete offering of all ourselves as set forth above is what is meant by the absolute surrender of the individual to the Divine. This will be done in order that the whole being may become a fit temple

^{1.} The Synthesis of Yoga, p. 82

for the Divine Presence and a faultless instrument for the divine work. Surrender is in fact the keystone, the main power and 'the first principle' of the Integral Yoga. The way of tapasya or discipline is long, arduous and full of perils. Surrender is by far the easy and swift way of attaining to the Divine. The supreme secret of the sadhana is 'self-less self-giving', an offering of oneself to the Divine without reserving anything for the satisfaction of ego. It calls down the Divine Grace that brings direct help and intervention. When the surrender becomes complete, the Divine would take up the sadhana and bring all fulfilment. God will remove all obstacles, purify the outer nature, awaken the inner self and finally reveal his presence, if anybody offers himself with trust and confidence +

Sri Krishna in the Bhagvad Gita solemnly declares that He will deliver from sin and evil all those who take refuge in Him through utter self-giving. God gives himself to those who give themselves entirely to Him. When one is entirely surrendered one feels the Divine Presence, Power, Light, Ananda, possessing the whole being. Surrender invites the descent into the being of the Mother's Force, which is the main support of the Yoga. Complete self-giving is indeed the only way to succeed in the difficult way of the Supramental Yoga. "The object is transformation, and the transformation can only be done by a force infinitely greater

than your own; it can only be done by being truly like a child in the hands of the Divine Mother."

Surrender is the most powerful and indispensable element in the sadhana. But surrender is not an easy thing that can be done in a day. The entire being in all its parts has to open, to surrender and to change. But every element is full of perversity and, offers resistance. The mind clings to its fixed ideas and beliefs; the vital prefers its own desires and pleasures; the physical is full of dullness and inertia. One must detect and reject persistently all that is false, obscure and undivine in one's nature. Every least movement of the being, its every habit and action, has to be watched, observed and referred to the higher knowledge of the Spirit within or above. Then the Light will come and in that light the Sadhaka must accept a right and reject a wrong movement by his will-power. He must also call in the Mother's power to support the will in its effort for rejection and purification. Anything that is not altogether wrong must be surrendered to the Mother's Force to be corrected, refined or exalted by its transforming action. By this discipline all the elements will be purified and prepared for making sincere and complete surrender.

The chief obstacles of surrender are desire and ego; so long as these two things persist surrender

^{1.} Bases of Yoga, p. 64

⁻ CC-0. Mumukshu Bhawan Varanasi Collection. Digitized by eGangotri

is not possible. The spiritual life demands that one should reject desire altogether from every part of the mind. All desires, whether good or bad, have to be cast aside, for they arise out of the ignorance of the unillumined vital and keep us chained to the lower nature. The ego should be eliminated from every part of the consciousness, whether mental, vital or physical. All these parts have to surrender one after another separately and learn to live entirely for and by the Divine. The Mother says, "Surrender may be defined as the giving up of the limits of your ego. To surrender to the Divine is to renounce your narrow limits and let vourself be invaded by it and made a centre for its play." The real bar to self-surrender is the attachment to one's own egoistic limitation; only when the limits of the ego are exceeded, one can become united with the divine consciousness and will.

Surrender must necessarily be progressive. No one can make complete surrender from the beginning. But there should be "a will in the being for that completeness". One must begin by making a central resolve or sankalpa of surrender. One resolves in a general way that the whole of one's life shall be given entirely to the Divine. That resolve should be made effective by seizing every opportunity that presents itself; it must be carried out in all the details of life. For

^{1.} Words of the Mother, 3rd Series, p. 73

the Integral Yoga requires complete mastery over all one's movements for the divinisation of life.

The demand made upon us is that we should turn the whole of our life into a conscious sacrifice. "The absolute surrender must be not only an experience in meditation, but a fact governing all the life, all the thoughts, feelings, actions." Our internal movements. our thoughts and feelings, no less than our external doings, are to be dedicated to the Supreme Lord of the universe. All our actions, even the most ordinary and trifling—speaking, eating, walking, reading, visiting friends—should be performed as consecrated acts done for the Divine; otherwise the outer life and the body will remain unchanged. There will be no harmony between the inner life and the outer, which will remain uncorrected and untransformed.

About detailed surrender the Mother speaks as follows: "This is what you have to do to carry out your general offering in detailed offerings. Live constantly in the presence of the Divine; live in the feeling that it is this presence which moves you and is doing everything you do. Offer all your movements to it, not only every mental action, every thought and feeling but even the most ordinary and external actions such as eating; when you eat you must feel that it is the Divine who is eating through you. When you can

^{1.} On Yoga II. Tome One, p. 570

thus gather all your movements into the One Life, then you have in you unity instead of division. No longer is one part of your nature given to the Divine, while the rest remains in its ordinary ways, engrossed in ordinary things; your entire life is taken up, an integral transformation is gradually realised in you."

The surrender must be total: the entire being with all its parts must be offered to the Divine. The triple nature of mind, life and body must be surrendered to the Divine, who is their master. Each of them in all its parts must learn to live in, and act for the Divine giving up its natural egoistic feelings and movements. It is insincerity to allow any part to follow its old ignorant ways and pursuits. All the elements of the being, even the most external, must accept the divine Truth and submit to the divine guidance and governance. The Grace will withdraw if one part opens and surrenders, while another part refuses, revolts or hides under a false cover. All the divergent parts must be unified in the Divine as the sole object of their existence. Until such unity is effected, difficulties and obstacles will not disappear, nor will surrender become complete and absolute. For such unification+ one should keep the will firm, convince the unruly parts of their errors and turn them to the Divine by patient and persistent action.

^{1.} Words of the Mother, pp. 74-5

Again the surrender must be voluntary. The surrender must be self-made, the outcome of a free choice and self-effort of the individual. "It must be the surrender of a living being, not of an inert automaton or mechanical tool."1 A mechanical surrender is of no use for spiritual progress or perfection. It is idle to expect that the Divine will do even the surrender for anybody. God who is love does not exact anything by coercion. He desires a willing and joyous selfoffering of love from his beloved creatures. The Mother says, "Surrender means a free total giving with all the delight of the giving: there is no sense of sacrifice in it. If you have the slighest feeling that you are making a sacrifice, then it is no longer surrender. For it means that you reserve yourself or that you are trying to give with grudging or with pain and effort, and have not the joy of the gift, perhaps not even the feeling that you are giving."2

Lastly, surrender must be active and not passive. An inert passivity that is too idle to follow the necessary discipline or obey the Divine Will is not real surrender. Nothing true and powerful can come out of the idle attitude that calls upon God to do everything and save one from all trouble and self-exertion. Such a tamasic surrender is a self-deception that does not

^{1.} The Mother, p. 8

^{2.} Words of the Mother, p. 223

lead to freedom but bondage to the lower nature. What is required is the glad and strong and powerful submission of a warrior who fights for divine victory against obscurity and falsehood.

The right attitude with regard to surrender is not indifference or passivity but vigorous opposition to the forces that attack the Truth or try to crush it down. A samata of indifference will not suffice when a general action is needed to establish a Truth against which immense forces of Falsehood have arranged themselves. Ariuna in the battlefield refused to fight against his assailants; Sri Krishna who spoke so much of samata strongly rebuked his attitude and insisted on his fighting the adversary. Therefore to take sides with the Truth and fight against Falsehood is not inconsistent with samata. Sri Aurobindo discriminates between two types of surrender, one active and the other passive. "Active surrender is when you associate your will with the Divine Will, reject what is not the Divine, assent to what is the Divine. Passive surrender is when everything is left entirely to the Divine, that few can really do, because in practice it turns out that you s urrender to the lower nature under pretext of surrendering to the Divine."1

There are indeed two different views regarding the

^{1.} Elements of Yoga, pp. 41-2

attitude of the sadhak in the matter of surrender. One view holds that when surrender has been made, then one should remain entirely passive depending upon the Divine Grace for bringing fulfilment. The conduct of the baby cat is cited as an illustration of the truth of this view-point. The kitten relies entirely upon the mother; instead of holding to her it lets the mother hold and carry it at her option. According to the other view the sadhak should not give up effort even after he has completely surrendered himself. The example of the baby monkey is cited in support of this view. The baby firmly clings to its mother in order to be carried about; it must hold tight, otherwise it will fall.

Sri Aurobindo's view is a synthesis of the above two divergent views. He says that the baby cat attitude should not be adopted before the surrender is complete. Entire self-giving becomes possible only when the psychic comes forward. For that brings a sudden and true surrender of the whole being and all difficulties disappear. At the beginning personal effort is required as a safeguard against inertia and idleness. When the Divine Shakti comes down from above to take up the sadhana, then indeed effort may cease. But before that one has to call down her power by aspiration, concentration or prayer. Besides there is need for consent to the true Force, rejection of the undivine and vigilance against wrong movements. The sadhak

must withdraw from the action of the lower Prakriti, follow the higher truth coming from above and thus do some enabling sadhana. But the personal effort must be made "with an increasing reality of surrender." The effort must have in it the spirit of surrender that calls in the Force to support the will and endeavour and is undisturbed by success or failure.

The discipline+ required for a total surrender is a total concentration of the being upon the Divine-The three master instruments, the mind, the heart and the will must concentrate on the one thing needful to the exclusion of everything else. The sadhak should train himself to see by his mind the Divine above and within himself and also all around himself in all things and beings and happenings. By his heart he will love the Divine in itself and for itself, but also the Divine in all beings, all powers, all personalities and forms in the universe. His will should always feel and receive and obey the divine impulsion and accept that alone as the sole motive force of his conscious action. But this also implies that he should universalise + himself by abolition of his ego and perceive the all governing Divine Power as the origin and support of his will and endeavour.

An entire consecration of all that the sadhaka thinks, feels and does will be the result of the total concentration of the mind, heart and will. But the crown of the consecration will be an absolute surrender or

self-giving of the whole nature to the Supreme Being. Sri Aurobindo says, "An absolute concentration of our will, our heart and our thought on that one and manifold Divine, an unreserved self-consecration of our whole being to the Divine alone—this is the decisive movement, the turning of the ego to That which is infinitely greater than itself, its self-giving and indispensable surrender." He further remarks that this is the first fundamental siddhi of the integral Yoga.

The development of the Yoga depends primarily. in the beginning of the path and long after, on the power of aspiration in the heart, the force of the will and the concentration of the mind for the attainment of the Divine. A persistent and forceful application of these soul energies is indispensable for forming an initial contact or some measure of identity, sayujya, with the Divine by rising above the lower self. So long as this contact is not established in some considerable degree, the personal effort of the sadhaka must not be abandoned. For this first stage of the Yoga has its necessity and utility and must be given its time for producing its result. There are elements in the nature which long prevent our mental idea or belief of the Divine from becoming a realisation, a living truth or a dynamic power for change. A too early assumption that we are in the hands of

^{1.} The Synthesis of Yoga, p, 101

the Supreme may produce a helpless inertia and prevent all progress of the sadhana. Hence there must be a period of internal struggle and effort in which the individual will have to reject the falsehood of the lower nature and to turn itself resolutely towards the divine truth.

Sri Krishna advises His friend and disciple, Arjuna, to turn all his mind to Him, all his heart to Him and to do every action as a sacrifice and offering to Him. The discipline enjoined here is to concentrate the mind, heart and will upon the Divine that one seeks and reject or throw out constantly every thought, feeling and impulse that is undivine and opposed to the siddhi of the Yoga. This is the indispensable first stage of the yoga—the stage of personal effort and self-discipline. But when a total consecration comes as a result of that discipline, then there is no more need of personal effort. God himself would deliver us from sin and suffering, and lead us to Him "through and beyond all sorrow and evil". That is the supreme and most secret thing of all, says the Lord Krishna.

But the Godhead did not reveal the mysterious process by which the deliverance would come. That secret of all secrets is the conscious working of the Mother's Force upon its direct descent into the adhar from the above. For, when the surrender becomes complete, the Divine Shakti descends into the human vessel and possesses it and progressively transforms it.

This is the second stage of the Yoga where the personal effort more and more dwindles and the supreme Mother-Force begins to work. At first there will be "the growing inrush of a great and conscious miraculous working from above." This preliminary inrush afterwards increases in force, comes under all conditions and stays longer and longer. A long and large total working will then have begun, sometimes luminous and intense, sometimes slow and obscure. "As the Force works, it brings in the different processes that are necessary for the sadhak, processes of knowledge, of Bhakti, of spiritualised action, of transformation of the nature."

But even after the working of the Force begins. the sadhak must support the Truth that descends and grows in the being and reject all falsehood of the lower nature. The will of the sadhak should always co-operate with the Divine power that is uplifting the nature towards the Light. This midway between the human and the working continues for a period long or short according to one's capacity for complete surrender to the higher control and guidance. At length the intermediate stage is followed by the last, where "there is no effort at all, no set method, no fixed sadhana": for the sadhak delivers up to the Divine Shakti the

^{1.} Letters, Vol. II, p, 5

entire charge of his Yoga. The great direct action of the Shakti culminates in a total spiritual trans formation of the being by a simple, natural, yet most powerful process.

The Mother says that there are three stages or gradations in the movement of self-surrender. The first step is surrender, saranagati, when the sadhak decides to dedicate his entire being to the Divine. The surrender may come either through knowledge or through devotion. The sadhak finds that the Divine is the sole reality of his life or that he is the only true object of his love and devotion. Then he decides to give up to the Divine the entire responsibility of his being. Next comes self-offering, atma-nivedana. Here the sadhak offers himself to the Divine, saying, "I give myself entirely to the Divine; let Him do whatever He likes with me. Let Him turn all my elements, good and bad to Him and fill them with calm and joy."

But then the sadhak perceives that he has many impulses and tendencies that conflict with one another. The disharmony among the different parts forms a natural bar to unified self-offering. So he begins to harmonise them by putting then under the control of the psychic will that first called for the surrender. The whole being is then turned towards and guided and inspired by the psychic and becomes harmonious. All the parts are organised around the divine Centre so

that all of them have the same consciousness, the same impulse and the same will. When the whole being thus becomes a unity, although a complex unity, then alone can the self-offering become effective. The Mother says, "You may offer yourself to the Divine with a spontaneous movement, but it is not possible to give yourself effectively without this unification. The more you are unified, the more you are able to realise self-giving."

Last comes self-consecration, atma-samarpana, which is the perfection of self-surrender. Here the sadhak has to offer the different elements to the Divine one after another. He finds that all the parts are not equally willing to progress or to submit to the divine guidance and will. Some of them revolt and refuse to give themselves up to the Divine. Then the sadhak has to make them quiet and show them the Light of the Truth. He has to turn the light to every part of the being and persuade it to surrender itself to the Divine. When all the elements have offered thenselves separately and together, then all difficulties come to an end and the nature becomes free from its impurities and imperfections.

The result of the above sadhana is an 'absolute unified surrender' which is achieved in the whole range of the mental, vital and physical nature.

^{1.} Words of the Mother, 3rd Series, p. 7

There takes place a radical conversion⁺, a turning of all elements towards the Divine. The whole being naturally, spontaneously and without reserve submits to the Divine as its supreme Master. This sincere, real and total self-giving is the final stage in the movement of surrender. After that all troubles cease and everything runs smoothly. "Then indeed yours is a glorious walk towards transformation, for you no longer go from darkness to knowledge but from knowledge to knowledge, light to light. happiness to happiness."

Complete consecration is however a slow and difficult process, if attempted by one's own independent efforts. The Divine Grace alone can remove all defects and obstacles and bring about a more or less swift realisation. For, surrender, though seemingly so simple, is yet most difficult to achieve owing to the resistance of our native ego. But help comes from Above, if anybody opens himself sincerely to the Divine power or, what amounts to the same thing, the Guru's Force. The ego will then disappear from the path and surrender become truly and altogether complete.

^{1.} Words of the Mother, 3rd Beries, p. 8

CHAPTER X

PURIFICATION OF THE NATURE

You must keep the temple clean if you wish to instal there the living presence.

Purification and Consecration are the two great necessities of the sadhana. Sri Aurobindo

Each movement in you that is false and contrary to the truth is a negation of the divine life.

No protection, no grace can save those who refuse to have the indispensable purification. The Mother

We have seen that surrender is the main power and chief process of the Integral Yoga. But surrender is not possible unless the nature is free from ego, rajas and desire that prevent its realisation. One element of surrender is purification, a throwing away of all that conflicts with the idea of the Divine in himself or of the Divine in ourselves. This rejection must be increasingly done in order that one may become fit for contact with the Divine or the revelation of his presence in the heart. To find the Divine and live in Him, we must get rid of ignorance, egoism, selfishness, vital desires, passions, emotions and all other impurities that conceal the Divine from us. All

perverse and undivine movements must be cast out from the adhar in order that it may be a fit dwelling for the Divine.

One indispensable discipline of yoga is purification of the nature. Unless the nature is purified and perfected, it cannot become a proper channel for complete expression of the divine truth, power, love, freedom and joy in the material plane. One aim of this Yoga is to rise out of the human into the Divine Nature; but this can be done only by rejecting the lower nature, which is akin to the obscure nature of the animal. Purification of the nature, which is essential for every yoga, has a special significance for the Integral Yoga. The object of the old yogas was to attain liberation of the soul by a release from the workings of the ignorant prakriti. But the Purna Yoga seeks to liberate the nature also by spiritual transformation. An elimination of all defects and impurities from the individual nature is therefore an essential discipline for this Yoga,

For the purpose of purification each part of the nature has to be taken up and cleaned and exalted to its highest height. All ignorance and egoism have to be banished, all defects and falsehood removed from the nature. The material part from which mind and life have emerged is full of tamas or inertia and dark ignorance. These sway and influence the higher parts and stand against their urges for perfection.

The result is that all parts offer a strong resistance to any change for a fuller and nobler life. But this resistance must be broken down and all impurities removed in order that the transformation may be complete. A discipline of self-purification is therefore essential for a radical change of the consciousness and nature.

The first basis of purification is a poise of detachment from the workings of the nature. The sadhak must go on observing himself and the movements of his nature with the help of the buddhi, which is the highest principle of the lower nature, For the intelligence has an innate power of standing apart and separating itself from these movements. By this power of detachment the sadhak should be able to regard the activities of his mind, life and body as workings of the general Nature, not as any part of his real being. This separative practice will result in a division of the being, 'a psychological partition,' between the lower or outward mind and the higher reason and will. The former is still subject to its old habitual movements but the latter stands back and learns to live in the indifferent calm of the inner spirit.

The inner being of calm, which is the Purusha within, awakens in time and no longer regards the joys and griefs of life as its own or having any permanent reality. One realises oneself as the Purusha.

witness Self, which becomes quite separate from the movements going on in the Prakriti. Then one remains silent, unbound, unattached and unmoved by anything external or transient. Gradually the calm of the Purusha extends to the nature parts and then the nature too remains unmoved by any disturbance. Here an essential purification has been effected leading to the soul's freedom from bondage to Prakriti. The separation of Purusha and Prakriti—witness self and active nature—is really the first essential step in the Supramental Yoga. Sri Aurobindo says, "This condition of the inner being and its silence separated from the surface consciousness and its little restless workings is the first liberation, the liberation of Purusha from Prakriti, and it is a fundamental experience."

But the detachment of Purusha from Prakriti gives only a relative freedom. It liberates the soul but it does not liberate the nature from its ignorance and impurity. To achieve this purpose, a further discipline of willed action has to be followed. Along with the work of introspection and detachment the sadhak must also call for the inner will to guide his life and action. For the intelligence has a will of its own as well as knowledge. By its will power it can reject what is false or undivine and accept what is true or divine in our movements. Anything

^{1.} Correspondence with Sri Aurobindo, Second Series, p. 45

that comes from the lower nature has to be rejected and everything that comes from Above has to be accepted. A double process of rejection of the wrong and acceptance of the right movement will bring about the purification of the lower nature. At first the buddhi may falter and fail in the struggle with the lower members. But if trouble arises, the sadhak must reject it by a firmness of the action of the buddhi. Any recurrence of the trouble must be met by greater vigilance and persistence of the will. At length the Prakriti after more or less resistance yields to the will of the Purusha and submits to its control.

As the sadhana proceeds, the inner Purusha emerges from within the veil of ignorance and comes forward to take hold of the outer being. The mental will is then replaced by the silent will of the Purusha behind the mind. The inner being dwells in a deep peace and silence and all impulses and actions proceed from that source. For the Purusha, the deeper psychic soul, on coming forward rejects or quiets down all wrong movements of the nature by its calm will or command. Then the outer being receives and follows only the lights and unges coming from the greater self within or above. Now the Purusha is no longer the unmoved witness but becomes the Lord, Ishwara, of the nature who guides and controls all her movements. Here the static freedom of the soul is followed by

the control of the Master, which brings about a dynamic change of the nature. This control of the nature by a higher will is a most efficient process of purification in the Integral Yoga. The mental control is only partial and precarious; but this spiritual control brings about an automatic rejection of the wrong and acceptance of the right movement without any struggle or coercion of the nature.

The above process of purification, however, is long and tedious requiring endless patience and perseverance. The demand upon us is constantly to cast a searching look inwards for detection of faults and defects. We are called upon to see clearly and reject firmly all impurities that stand in the way of our perfection. The sadhak must not try to cover up and justify his faults with plausible excuses. Nor should he draw back from the inner battle that rages on many fronts-mental, vital and physical-at the same time. Every sadhak has to pass through this period, whether long or short, of effort and struggle for control and purification of the nature. But it is only the first stage of the journey, the first movement of ascension that is difficult. Afterwards when the psychic awakes or a Higher Power descends into the nature, the path becomes smoother, though difficulties do not vanish at once and altogether.

The object of the above discipline is not merely to gain mukti or liberation but to make the nature a

fit instrument for divine works and manifestation. The aim is not merely a static but a dynamic realisation, not only a change of consciousness but also a change of nature. But all need not follow the above method of division into two consciousnesses. An alternative method is the surrender of the entire being in all its parts to the Divine. The sadhak instead of relying upon his own effort alone puts himself in the hands of the Divine with entire trust and confidence. The Mother says, "There are two ways of uniting with the Divine. One is to concentrate in the heart and go sufficiently deep down to find there His Presence; the other is to fling oneself in His arms, to nestle there as a child nestles in its mother's arms. with a total "abandon"; and of the two this latter seems to me the easier."1

The self-offering of course implies the giving up of all that goes against the sadhana. This cannot be made perfect from the beginning owing to resistance of the mental and the vital being. But if the will remains sincere and strong, the resistance will steadily wear away and surrender grow in the being. When surrender becomes complete, the Divine himself would take up the sadhana. He would purify the heart and nature, remove the veils, develop the sadhana and give the necessary experiences⁺. Sri Aurobindo says

^{1.} Some Answers from the Mother, p. 37

that the idea and experience of the Divine doing all belong to the Yoga based on surrender. It is the only way by which the intervention of the Divine power becomes possible before nature has been prepared for its direct action.

Surrender brings about an opening of the beingthe being opens inward to the psychic or upward to a Higher Power above. This opening is of capital importance in the Integral Yoga. The process of rejection by the will and its effort is not enough to remove the ego and rajas embedded deep in the human nature. Besides the nature has not only to be purified but raised to the status of a higher spiritual being. This can only be done by the coming of a new consciousness that will replace the lower movements by the higher. When the psychic opens, it comes forward with its direct control and guidance of the mind, life and body. It discloses and quietly and patiently removes all imperfections and brings the right mental and vital movements; it also brings down the higher consciousness from above. psychic, as it grows and manifests, detects immediately all wrong movements or elements and at the same time supplies almost automatically the true element or movement which will replace them—this process is much easier and more effective than that of a severe tapasya of purification."1

^{1.} Letters, Vol. I, p. 278

The psychic change resulting from the purification of nature opens the being to a higher plane of consciousness. The descent of spiritual forces from the above brings about a greater purification and higher perfection of the nature. The ego ceases to strive, the mind falls silent, the vital does not drive, the physical casts off its inertia: all thoughts and actions originate from a greater source above the individual. The lower Prakriti, under compulsion of a higher Shakti, becomes free from the strifes of its qualitative modes or gunas and their troubled and improper action in our mind, life and body. The final stage comes when the sattiva, raias and tamas are changed into their divine counterparts. No sin, impurity or imperfection can exist in a nature that is turned into a divine nature. This culmination becomes possible only when the power of the Supermind descends to complete the process of transformation.

The opening to the Mother's Force is the one sovereign way of purification and transformation. "This opening is a throwing wide of all the nature on all its levels and in all its parts to receive into itself without limits the greater divine Consciousness which is there already above and behind and englobing this mortal half-conscious existence." The word 'opening' means "receptivity to the Mother's presence and her forces."

^{1.} The Hour of God, p. 52

Receptivity denotes an ability of the consciousness on the various levels to receive the Divine Force and its action within oneself and allow it to work freely, guiding one's sight and will and action. This again implies an aspiration in the heart for the coming down of the Power from above and a will to receive it and allow it to transform the being by its conscious working. The sadhaka aspires in a prayerful mood for the descent of the Force, feels its presence and its action within and remains passive to its working without offering any resistance. All his elements also must consent to be guided and governed by the Mother's Force in order that it may work freely and purify and change the being entirely.

The supreme Divine Power, as it works, brings the divine peace, equality, wideness, strength, light, knowledge, Ananda—if any of them comes, it is an indication of the opening. The more these things are felt, the more complete the opening and the greater the power for purification and transformation. Sri Aurobindo says, "There is a state in which the sadhak is conscious of the Divine Force working in him or of its results at least and does not obstruct its descent or its action by his own mental activities, vital restlessness or physical obscurity and inertia. That is openness to the Divine." The right way to get the opening is to

^{1.} Lights on Yoga, p. 55 c

aspire for it, to keep the mind quiet, to widen oneself to receive (one can do it by a little practice), to reject all that shuts one to the Divine. Besides the sadhaka should have an entire faith and reliance on the Mother and trust in her working for a divine change of the nature and of the life.

The Divine Force carries in itself the omnipotent power of the Divine. It can deal effectively with all impurities by penetrating the darkest recesses of the being. By its perfect and flawless working it can bring about a swift and radical purification of the entire being. Even the incorrigible subconscient parts yield to its irresistible transforming action. The one imperative need of the Yoga therefore is the opening to the Mother's Force for fulfilment of the Yoga. But in order to remain open the sadhaka must allow the Force to work in the adhar without any let or hindrance. This implies rejection of all wrong movements of the mental. vital and physical nature. One must reject all that comes from the ego, from vital desire, from the thoughtless mind, all that prevents an inner change or an outer transformation. Besides one must aspire for the opening and call down the Force to take up and transform the being. Even when aspiration fails, one must remember the Mother, keep quiet and call again and again. Even the call only with the mind or the mental word ends by bringing the Force and opening up the consciousness once again. Sri Aurobindo says, "The Mother's force will act and bring the result in its own time, provided one offers all to her and aspires and is vigilant, calling and remembering her at all times, rejecting quietly all that stands in the way of the action of her transforming Force."

But even a sincere call for help on the Mother's Force is not enough for a change of nature. The sadhak must become conscious of the working of the Mother's Force within him and support the action by giving his personal assent. The assent means acceptance of the Mother's Force and rejection of all egoistic or ignorant forces. Again this implies that the sadhak should hold to what is true and divine and throw out what is false and undivine. He must accept all that turns him towards the Divine, its light, peace and joy, and reject all that turns him away from God and binds him down to the lower nature.

The right discrimination cannot of course come at once but one may succeed in time by sincere endeavour. The power of discernment sometimes comes by practice—a sort of referring the matter to the inner being and listening for an answer which may or may not take the form of words. But the difficulty is that one may mistake the suggestions of the ego for the right answer. The difficulty however can be removed by awakening the dormant

I. Letters of Sri Aurobindo on the Mother, p. 178

psychic being which will tell the right from the wrong with unfailing certitude. When the psychic opens, one gets the right intimation from within as to what is to be done, what avoided, what is wrong or true in thought, feeling and action. For the light of the inmost soul is our one sure illumination so long as we walk still amidst the darkness of the Ignorance.

The Mother gives the following guiding rule to help the beginner in the matter of right discrimination. "However, to help at the beginning, one can take as a guiding rule that all that brings with it or creates peace, faith, joy, harmony, wideness, unity and ascending growth comes from the Truth; while all that carries with it restlessness, doubt, suspicion, sorrow, discord, selfish narrowness, inertia, discouragement and despair comes straight from the falsehood." Only the Light of Truth descending from above will give the sure power to discriminate the impulses of Truth from the impulses of falsehood.

Here one may also call on the Mother's Light which will give the necessary help and guidance. The inner guidance comes of itself when with the increase of our devotion for the Divine Shakti, we have the power to receive in us her dynamic presence and her conscious working and surrender ourselves to her will and command or control. Then

^{1.} Bulletin, Pondicherry, February '65

there is no risk of making a mistake or taking the false lights for the true ones; the knowledge will come from above and the power to dissolve inner obstacles. For the Shakti not only guides and impels us to do the right thing at every moment but also pulls us back forcefully from what is against the truth and her will. Sri Aurobindo says, "The Divine Power secretly or overtly first impels, then begins clearly to control and order and finally takes up the whole burden of the Yoga."

The presence of the Divine Mother is always there in the inner being but it is veiled by the outer consciousness. One must learn to go inside and find the presence within and the psychic behind the heart. The constant presence of the Mother comes by practice; it is by aspiration and meditation that the hidden presence reveals itself through the Divine Grace. One must concentrate in the heart as much as possible with the aspiration to find there the presence of the Divine Mother. But the presence comes not by meditation alone but by faith and openness, which implies confidence in and surrender to the action of the Divine Force. the Mother. The seeker must assent to her working and reject all that is contrary to her will and submit to her governance. Then he will feel the presence within for the greater part of the day even amidst the work and afterwards also during the sleep.

^{1.} The Synthesis of Yoga, p. 157

The psychic opening is one sure way to receive the Mother's presence in the heart. As the psychic has a close connection with the Mother, so when that opens, the feeling of the presence naturally comes in the inner heart. When the psychic opens fully, one becomes aware of the Mother's presence in all parts and all movements of the nature. For this feeling originating from the psychic centre spreads to the inner being and from there remoulds and takes possession of the whole outer consciousness. Then the mind perceives its thoughts as coming from the Mother, the heart is full of love and devotion for her, the vital receives and accepts her impulsions and even the physical feels her concrete presence in its consciousness. The sadhaka remains turned to the Mother at all times and becomes aware of her force moving, guiding and helping him towards a divine change of the entire being and nature. When the being opens to the direct guidance of the Mother's Light and power, that is the surest indication of success in our spiritual endeavour.

The first way of purification, as we have already seen, is one of detachment from the workings of the lower nature. This method brings liberation by separating the Purusha or conscious being from the Prakriti, the ignorant nature. Here the main reliance is upon the personal effort which takes up most of the burden. The sadhak with the help of a vigilant mind and vital

sees, observes, thinks and decides upon the course to be followed. The other way is that of opening to the psychic being or the Divine Power, calling the Light and Force from above and allowing them to change the nature by their direct and powerful action. Here one relies upon the action of a higher power to get out of the inferior consciousness and ignorant way of living.

The second method relates to the final stage in the process of purification of nature. For all difficulties and obstacles disappear, when the nature submits to the working of the Divine Light and Power. By this method the nature is not only purified and liberated from its ignorant working but transmuted and perfected by the dynamic power of a higher consciousness. Usually there is a mixture of the two methods until the being becomes entirely open and wholly submitted to the Divine. Both the methods may be used alternately or at different times or in collaboration according to the need or trend of the sadhana. For, any one method, however logically complete, may not by itself produce the entire results of a movement. Sri Aurobindo remarks, "In most cases these two methods emerge and work together and finally fuse into one. But one can begin with either, the one that one feels most natural and easy to follow."1

I. Letters, Vol. I, p. 70

But whatever the way followed—whether of tapasya or of surrender, one must go to the end. Difficulties and delays are usual in the early stages of the sadhana. These things are due to the opposition of nature or want of its receptivity. Each part refuses to admit a radical change and progress by making submission to anything higher than itself. The doors of the soul do not open until the being is ready for spiritual experiences. The way of yoga is long and difficult and the sadhak must have firm faith, unlimited patience and single-midded perseverance. He must go on resolutely in spite of temporary falls, failures or arrests in the sadhana, He must not be upset or pained or discouraged by anything, but call persistently for the divine help and guidance. The Grace will come in time and lead the sadhak to the very end of the divine journey. Sri Aurobindo says, "I fully believe that one who has the call in him cannot fail to arrive, if he follows patiently the way towards the Divine."1 The Mother also assures us that the highest perfection can be achieved in spite of the persistent opposition of the obstinate human nature.

^{1.} Letters, Vol. II, p. 228

CHAPTER XI

THE YOGA OF DIVINE WORK

One can give not only one's soul, but all one's power to the Divine.

Let us work as we pray, for indeed work is the body's best prayer to the Divine.

The Mother

To work in the calm, ever-widening consciousness is at once a sadhana and a siddhi.

Work for the Mother done with the right concentration on her is as much a sadhana as meditation and inner experience.

Sri Aurobindo

The Yoga of Work or Karmayoga may be taken as the keynote in the high-pitched symphony of this system of integral Yoga. For Karmayoga consists in a discipline that purifies the nature, brings surrender into the lower being and unites us with the Divine in the active life. A Yoga of work, a union with the Divine in our will and acts—and not only in our thought and feeling—is an indispensable element in an integral Yoga. Transformation of the nature becomes possible not by abstaining from actions but by doing them and dedicating them to the Divine.

Karmayoga is the secure foundation upon which we can build the sacred temple of the Divine Life on this earth. We must, therefore, form some idea of this yoga, which should be practised as a preliminary discipline and the beginning of our journey towards the supramental realisation.

According to Sri Aurobindo the world is real, it is an embodiment of the active Brahman. He asserts that the evils of the world are only temporary masks of the Divine. They exist for the process of the world's evolution from mortal su leing into divine delight. The soul comes here to express the divine perfection and fulfil its divine possibilities in earthly life. The true object of our existence is to be dynamically united with the Divine for the purpose of co-operation in the divine lila or world game, which is the gradual manifestation of the Spirit in the material world. The soul's activity is the means of a new creation, the growth and advent of a new race, the embodiment of the Divine and his play upon earth. The Integral Moga therefore does not support renunciation of the world.

A flight from the world, renunciation of earthly life, is not necessary for rising to a higher spiritual status. The ascetic enjoys his bliss in solitude leaving the world to its misery and stupidity. But retirement brings no mastery over the nature which remains as impure as ever. Mere separation from

the contact of the world does not lead to freedom from old drsires and hankerings. These remain as seeds, which may come up whenever an opportunity presents itself. A mere bodily cessation of work does not bring the true release from bondage to the separative ego-idea. "A man might sit still and motionless for ever and yet be as much bound to the Ignorance as the animal or the insect."

The rejection of the external life as useless or undivine is no solution of the problem of existence. One may have cally and peace in a secluded life, but the mind gets disturbed as soon as one comes out into activity. The soul may become free from bondage but loses the power to deal with life and the world. That is the old Vedantic theory of liberation which seeks lava or extinction of the individual in the supracosmic Self. It is the spirit departing into pure spirit, 'flight of the Alone to the Alone'; the soul casting off Nature flies away to the pure Self aloof from all creation. Here the soul does not want to share its salvation or bliss of union with the material body or with other souls or with the world. This idea of sole possession of God is tainted with egoism, which is a knot of the lower nature. But the Purna Yogi would unite with the Self beyond as well as the Self within the universe by becoming one with all. This oneness

^{1.} The Synthesis of Yogc, p. 304

to have an effective meaning must be in the inner soul as well as in the outer activity. Hence a divine work in the world becomes not merely possible but necessary for complete union.

The Purna Yoga aims at complete mastery over our nature and surroundings. The powers of the being have not to be discarded but utilised for divine action and self-expression. A perfection of mind, life and body has to be achieved for a divine change of the undivine world. Transformation and purification of the nature can be achieved not by inner experience but by participation in the external work of life. So an ascetic vairagva or aloofness that denies life and world to attain Nirvana is out of place here. What is required is change of attitude and consciousness. "The really important thing is to develop a state of consciousness in which one can live in the Divine and act from it on the physical world."

Karmayoga means union with the Divine through the medium of work, By work Sri Aurobindo means action done for the Divine and more and more in union with the Divine. The work to be yoga must be done for the sake of the divine or in a spirit of devotion to the Divine. All work is turned into worship when it is consecrated and dedicated to the Divine. But the mind must be fixed not on the work but on

^{1.} More Lights on Yoga, p. 43

the Divine. The goal is the Divine and work is only a means of approaching him. Every work should be an offering, a sacrifice, done without desire or egoism and with perfect equality of mind in all happenings. The object should be not personal gain, reward or result but fulfilment of the Divine will. The Mother says, "You must do the work as an offering to the Divine and take it as part of your sadhana. In that spirit the nature of the work is of little importance and you can do the work without losing the contact with the inner presence."

Above all in the yoga of work the sadhak must have the consciousness that it is the Divine Power that is doing all the work and that he is only an instrument in its hands. "The sadhaka has not only to think and know but to see and feel concretely and intensely even in the moment of the working and in its initiation and whole process that his works are not his at all, but are coming through him from the Supreme Existence, He must be always aware of a Force, a Presence, a Will that acts through his individual nature. Then all impulse of action comes from Above and we are no longer bound by any work or its consequences. For the Divine Shakti works through our nature for the fulfilment of the divine intention in the world and we are no longer enslaved to desire or to any movement

^{1.} The Synthesis of Yoga, pp. 262-3

or impulse of nature. Aspiration for divine union and the will of consecration bring down the Mother's Force to do the work of transformation. The Force finally takes up the yoga, works for perfection of the nature, which becomes a flawless instrument for divine work. Then the divine will is fulfilled through the medium of a free soul and a luminous nature in constant union with the supreme Master of Works.

Another way of doing the yoga of divine work is the separation of the Purusha from the Prakriti. Here the method is to stand back detached from the movements of the mind, life and physical being. One has to regard them as activities of the general Nature imposed upon the individual being by her past workings. As far as one succeeds in this, one sees the mind, life, body, not as part of his real being which is the inner soul. Then one has the experience of two consciousnesses or a double consciousness in his personality. The inner being called Purusha remains calm, silent, unbound, while the outer being or Prakriti is active in front. The former watches the activities of the latter as a witness, as if they were a thing on the surface. This condition of absolute detachment of the Purusha from the workings of the Prakriti is called kaivalya, which is the acme of liberation.

The next step in this yogic method is a movement towards liberation of the prakriti from its imperfections.

Then the purusha instead of being a witness becomes the Lord of nature. Here the purusha with its will to perfection rejects what has to be rejected and accepts what can be kept and transformed. The inner purusha reflects or even represents the true Self above and the outer nature becomes a pure channel of expression of the inner being. Also the inner opening may liberate the inmost psychic being that will come forward to turn the being towards the Divine and make it a fit instrument for divine work. The whole process may in the end open mind, life and body to the Divine Power and its direct action, guidance and governance. Thus the two methods of Karmayoga, though distinct at the outset, works towards the same end of divine expression in action and finally fuse together into a single combined process.

Karmayoga is indispensable for the yoga of transformation. The object is change of the ignorant human nature into the luminous divine nature. But a necssary condition of the change is the curification of mind, life and body. The lower parts have to be purified, illumined and prepared by participation in the daily activities of life. The innumerable experiences of every day and every instant are necessary to unite the highest Reality with the external nature, to bring God into life." The Mother says, "The daily activity is the anvil on which all the

clements must pass and re-pass in order to be purified, refined, made supple and ripe for the illumination which contemplation gives to them." Selflesss work done for the sake of duty or the Divine brings about a purification of the nature which becomes capable of reflecting like the calm still waters of a lake the luminous pure Self or God above the nature.

Meditation can deal only with the inner being; it brings inner experiences but cannot change the outer life. The ego sense preval in all parts of the being. This has to be effaced by doing work with the right attitude and in the right consciousness. Work gives the opportunify to purify and refine the elements by teaching them self-abnegation, devotion, kindness and generosity. Through works alone can we get rid of the feelings and movements that are egoistic, undivine and contrary to the yogic ideal. By works alone the lower being can be expanded, elevated and converted into a medium of divine expression.

Karmayoga is a most powerful means of realising integral union. The yoga of works brings union with the Divine in our will and action, which is an indispensable perfection in the Integral Yoga. A union in knowledge and feeling alone would be 'a maimed affair' that does not go far enough. To fulfil the Divine in life, the consecration of works is

^{1.} Prayers and Meditations of the Mother, p. 5

indispensable. Work done for the Divine naturally brings the right consciousness in the being. It is as much effective as meditation or any particular practice of Yoga. Work completes the sadhana by bringing the inner experience into the outer nature. Otherwise one becomes unbalanced, without any harmony between the inner feeling and the outward action. The inner light cannot express itself in action, which still follows its old customary mistaken ways of life, and liature remains unillumined and untransformed.

The sadhaka of the Purna Yoga surrenders his entire being to the Divine in order that His will may be fufilled in himself and in the world. By this process he is freed from the ego in activity_the sense of himself as the doer of works. He feels the Divine Presence supporting him and doing all his works. This means not merely static but also dynamic union in all the active life. Karmayoga by its law of sacrifice and law of self-giving transmutes the lower nature into a channel for the expression of the divine will. This mutation denotes spiritual transformation of the whole nature. It is a step towards the supramental change, which alone can bring about complete dynamic identity with the Divine

But what is the disciplinet required for integral union through works? The primary condition is freedom from bondage to the lower nature. The two great knots that bind us to the lower nature are desire and ego. In the field of action desire takes the form of seeking after the fruits of our works. Therefore the first rule is that the sadhak must be free from all vital motives of self-pleasure or demand for external reward. He must realise that he has a right to do works, but no right to the fruits thereof. His only object should be the fulfilment of his duty or the command of God. List reward lies in the joy of service and of inner growth through selfless works.

The second rule is the equality of mind in all circumstances of life. The sadhak must have a heart that remains calm and unmoved amidst all that happens. He must be free from or at least keep control over all mental and vital movements that · disturb the inner peace. He must not be carried away by the rush and impulsion of the vital feelings, such as desire, anger, pride, fear, disgust and the rest that upset and weaken the human mind. He must not be elated by success or depressed by failure. Neither joy nor sorrow can sway him from the calm equal poise of the Spirit. This equality results from the renunciation of desire for fruits and self-surrender to the Divine. The Mother says, "In Peace and Silence the Eternal manifests: allow nothing to disturb you and the Eternal will manifest;

have perfect equality in face of all and the Eternal will be there."1

The third discipline lies in the surrender of our actions and our being to the Divine who is their origin. The whole of our life should be a devoted self-giving to the Divine. All our actions, whether great or small, should be offered as a sacrifice to the Supreme. There should be a constant memory of the Divine and the consciousness of the work as an offering upon his cosmic white. Even the most external work such as eating, talking, walking, reading or even breathing can and should be made into a conscious sacrifice. The Mother says, "In all pursuits, intellectual or active, your one motto should be, 'Remember and Offer.' Let whatever you do be done as an offering to the Divine."²

But the greatest sacrifice is the uttermost selfgiving to the Divine. The whole of our being—mind, will, heart, sense, life and body—should be surrendered to the Divine. The sadhak ther feels that it is the Divine Power that is working in and through him. He feels that all his thoughts feelings and actions come from that source. Actions do not bind him, because the Divine Power, and not the ignorant nature, determines the movements of his nature. He stands above

^{1.} Prayers and Meditations of the Mother, p. 8

^{2.} Words of the Mother, p. 78

the dualities of nature and realises his essential identity with the Spirit. He lives in the peace, light and self-existent delight of the Divine. This spiritual realisation is called salokya-mukti or liberation into the divine consciousness "by which the whole conscious existence dwells in the same status of being as the Divine in the state of Sachchidananda."

There are also three stages by which the complete dynamic identity becomes possible. At first the sadhak has the sense of being a separate worker. He feels that he does the work, out he does it for the Divine. He regards himself as a servant who fulfils the will of his Divine Master. He gives up all desire and attachment to the results of his action. This is the first step towards liberation from the meshes of the ignorant lower nature. The next stage comes by increase of devotion through dedicated work. At first the sadhak still feels that he is thinking. feeling, willing and doing his works. But he also feels that Prakriti or the Divine Shakti behind is inspiring and guiding all his actions. She indicates the way to do the works and determines their results while he himself is a subordinate doer. Afterwards he finds that all power belongs to the Shakti, who carries out all his actions. The sense of the individual worker diappears and the sadhak realises that he is a passive instrument in the hands of the Divine Power. That Power is driving and shaping his thought, will, feeling and action guided by the Divine Will. The Universal Shakti is acting through his senses and organs to fulfil the cosmic purpose. The sadhak then rises above the gunas or qualitative modes of action of the lower Nature. He unites with the Purusha or Spirit above and becomes free from bondage to the Prakriti.

But the Prakriti itself is not yet free from the lower workings. So the union cannot be true or permanent. This becomes possible in the final stage by the transformation of the nature. As the sadhana proceeds, the higher Divine Power descends into the adhar, the human receptacle. By her direct action she changes the ignorant nature into a divine nature of the Supreme Being. The yogi no longer feels himself a servant or instrument but truly a child of the Divine Mother who is identified with her in knowledge, force, consciousness, joy of existence. He also realises that he is an eternal portion, amshah sanatanah, of the Divine, of this infinite Being, of his conscious Force and supreme Ananda.

At this final stage of karmayoga, the distinction between the two aspects, Ishwara and his Shakti, begins to disappear. This stage comes by the increasing manifestation of the Divine, the Ishwara in all our being and nature. The realisation comes that the Divine is the sole Reality of existence. The sadhak becomes aware of the Divine Presence within,

around and above him. The Ishwara becomes the ruler and possessor of his being. All workings of his nature are felt as the conscious activity of the Supreme, "a divine movement of the Eternal." The yogin becomes eternally free from egoism, desire and all other knots of nature. He has a complete joy of the Spirit manifested in his being and nature. This is the highest realisation of the perfection and delight of dynamic unity with the Supreme Purusha and his Supreme Nature.

Sri Aurobindo lays emphasis upon two results of the Karmayoga, which are important for perfection and integral God realisation. The yoga of work demands that we must dedicate all our acts to the supreme Lord of Sacrifice. All our activities, inner as well as outer—thought, will and action—should be offered to the Divine who is their source and supporter. A consecration of the entire being leads inevitably to the highest love and adoration of the Master of our existence. This love also includes a love for all beings and creatures that are habitations of the all-existent Divine. Thus the way of works by its road of sacrifice leads to the path of Devotion that can be as complete and wide as possible.

Moreover the practice of Karmayoga requires a constant inward remembrance of the One Divine that dwells in everything. A constant memory of this kind is 'a dynamic meditation' that leads to a

vision and vivid consciousness of the universal Spirit on which we meditate. "On its summits it rises into a constant living and thinking and willing and acting in the presence of the Supramental, the Transcendent."

The Supreme Reality is no longer hidden by its forms and figures but appeares concretely in all that we see and hear, touch and sense, all of which we are conscious. Thus the way of work turns by communion with the Divine to the way of Knowledge as complete and integral as possible. So we find that all the three powers of divine Work, Love and Knowledge go together, work together and finally become united, completed, perfected by each other.

^{1.} The Synthesis of Yoga, p. 128

CHAPTER XII

THE YOGA OF DIVINE KNOWLEDGE

The complete realisation of unity is the essence of the integral knowledge and of the integral Yoga.

For integral self-possession we must be one not only with the Self, with God but with all existences.

-Sri Aurobindo

The object of spiritual knowledge is the Supreme, the Divine, the Infinite and the Absolute. traditional system looks upon the supreme Truth as a non-cosmic existence or else a non-existence. All that is individual or cosmic has to be utterly renounced as a state of ignorance. The sole reality is the Brahman upon which our mind has falsely imposed the name and form of the universe; so the individual self must be merged in the one Being or Non-being. What we must attain is Nirvana, an extinction of the ego, a cessation of all activities of the nature or a pure self-absorbed bliss of being. Action may at first be helpful to purify the nature, but afterwards all action has to be abandoned; for action may prepare salvation, but cannot give it. Even devotion, love and worship are based upon duality and therefore must

disappear; for duality cannot exist in the supreme Knowledge where the individual loses itself in the One and the Infinite.

There is a truth behind this attitude of the seeker of knowledge. There is a pure existence, a supreme silence in the Being that is beyond all activity and at most a Witness. All exists merely as name and form in this passive Self, which is calm, motionless, indifferent and does not originate or take part in the action which it allows. But the silent Self is a support or background to existence; it is not the one entirely real existence, not in itself the Supreme, paratpara. The Supreme is the Lord and the all-originating Spirit; it is the source, sanction, efficient power and master of all activities. All movements proceed from this highest Self, paramatman, all are determined by its Will, all are operations of its Shakti or conscious power. The object of a Yoga of Knowledge must therefore be nothing else than this eternal Divine Being that is the sole existing Brahman and yet the individual soul and the Universe.

Our aim is to arrive at and possess identity with the Eternal Being in and beyond the universe, which is the final summit of knowledge. The first condition of this realisation is a purification of all the members without which union is impossible. Purity here means freedom from all wrong movements of nature that are obstacles to realisation of the self or the Divine. There must be an integral purity; the mind must be rid of desire, the vital of its craving and attachment, the heart of the false emotions of fear, wrath, hatred, lust, etc., which are its chief impurity. But the greatest impediment is the ego; it is the root of all deformation in our nature. So we must reject all egoism from our thoughts, will and feeling and the more persistent ego-sense from the centre of our consciousness.

But the most important need of this Yoga is concentration or meditation, which ordinarily means the fixing of the mind on an idea, a form or an object by drawing back from its distracting activities. As the contemplation deepens, one loses all awareness of the external environment and the inner nature. This condition brings illumination about the object of meditation and reveals the truth concealed behind the thing. The final aim is ascent into the absolute state of Samadhi where thought ceases by merging in the object of contemplation. Here the soul attains a kind of identity with the Divine called savujva-mukti by which it becomes free even in its separation, even in the duality; or else it loses itself in the silence of the Ineffable, which is known as laya.

But the aim of the integral Yoga is the conversion of the whole being into divinity, a living in the divine consciousness. This denotes a settled condition in the One and Infinite, a constant union and identification with it in activity as well as passivity. The inner consciousness has to be extended into the outer nature for its transformation into a divine Nature. Concentration or samadhi in this Yoga therefore means "a unified state of consciousness which remains aware of the Divine in all circumstances." The mind remains indrawn and still and fixed in the self or directed to the Divine, when it is outwardly busy with the affairs of the world. This is the wider sense which the Gita attaches to the word samadhi.

To enter into this state of constant samadhi, what we have to do is to make a conscious effort to retain the higher consciousness at all times and also dynamise it in all movements of active life. The divine status gained in samadhi must remain in all states and conditions; otherwise we shall fall from it by the distracting contacts of the world. Our day-to-day life, what we do or think during the ordinary hours, must be in accord with the higher and deeper consciousness that we attain during the time of meditation. There must be an active will and a ceaseless aspiration to make the results of concentration concrete and dynamic in one's outer nature and life. "The consciousness of the sadhak must learn how to remain constantly concentrated on the Divine-see Him, feel Him, think of Him, touch Him, love Him and serve Him, at every moment of the life."1 This is the way by which meditation can

^{1.} The Integral Yoga of Sri Aurobindo

be made normal in the waking or active condition, which is the perfection of samadhi. The descent of the higher being with its light, power and bliss is however the surest and most effective means of attaining this waking or essential samadhi.

The one great difficulty that is encountered in meditation is the inrush of distracting thoughts or impulses that defeat its purpose. Some methods of countering the invasion of foreign thoughts have already been dealt with in the chapter on Foundations of Yoga. Here we shall deal with two other effective methods of ridding the mind of disturbing elements. One way is to regard the thoughts as coming not from within our own self but from the outside; then we can see that they actually enter within from outer spaces. We have to detect the thoughts as they enter, to resolutely shut them out and throw them away before they enter. By following this process of rejection, Sri Aurobindo reached the silence of Nirvana where everything appears as illusion, "materialised shadows without any substance." Another method is to ignore the existence of the distracting thoughts on the surface mind. One has to exert the will, to plunge deeper and gather the consciousness round the object of meditation. Here one may take the help of a mantra, an image or symbol of the Divine, a silent invocation to the Divine Person whose presence is sought after. Then the foreign thoughts will recede for want of attention and the

mind will fix itself upon the desired object without deflection.

The primary aim of Knowledge must be the discovery of the self, of our true self-existence, atmajnana; for our present mode of living is not our true existence. We have no true knowledge of ourselves or the world and we therefore live in a false relation with our environment. This falsity leads to disorders, confusions and sufferings both in our personal and in our communal life. The error proceeds from a false identification of ourselves with the body or the life or the mind. But the self, our true being, is higher than these things which are the becomings of the self. We have to realise this self, "our eternal utter Being", and make it the foundation of our inner and outer life.

The Yoga of Knowledge has conceived a negative and a positive method of discipline by which we can arrive at the true self-knowledge. The negative way is to say always, "I am not the body", next, "I am not the life", and finally, "I am not the mind, the sense, the thought." By this practice, we get rid of our identification with the body, the life and the mind and begin to experience the presence of the soul. The other way is to conceive of the soul as the conscious being, the true Person within us. Of that soul we then say, "I am the Self, the pure, the eternal, the blissful," and by concentrating our thought and being upon it we become the self, the divine individual.

Our first imperative aim, as stated above, is to know ourselves as the self, the spirit and to exist consciously in that true being. Next we have to discover that Self in the world, in the universal Nature; for an indivisible oneness is the ultimate and essential truth of existence. This Self or Brahman we have to realise according to the Upanishad in three different ways: all in the Self, the Self in all and the Self as the all, sarvam brahma. The Universal Self is best realised with the help of the image of the ether. As the ether both contains and is, as it were, contained in all things, so too the self both contains and inhabits all existences, lives in them and is their reality. The sadhaka must therefore in the image of the ether accustom his mind by meditation and concentration to think always of the one self or Brahman everywhere and of all things as dwelling in the conscious being of the Eternal. He will then realise that the Brahman inhabits all objects of perception and is their true self and conscious Spirit. He is no longer a separate and individual soul but becomes the universal soul or Self and feels all existences within his limitless being. The realisation of this equal self, samam brahma, is the foundation of that unity with the All which we have to establish for a divine life on earth.

At the outset the sadhaka may perceive the universal self as static and inactive, it sustains but does not participate in the world movements. But for an integral

realisation, he must realise the self as the All not only in the unique essence of things, but also in the manifold form and activity of things. He has to perceive that the self not only contains all but becomes all by the creative force of its eternal consciousness. Then the forms will no longer appear as empty or unreal images but as real forms of which Brahman is the substance and, as it were, the material of their formation. The silent self will then be realised as the eternal Divine Being who throws itself into infinite forms, dwells within them and governs all their motions. We perceive that the Divine is not only the source of all action and formation but their doer and creator through his executive force. Thus the experience of the one Brahman everywhere leads to the revelation of the Universal Divine that becomes all existences. We see all in God, God in all and God as the All, sarvabhutani. We embrace the whole world as the embodiment of the Divine, which is the all-embracing integral knowledge.

The ultimate object of all Yoga of Knowledge as stated already is the Transcendent, the indefinable Absolute. By concentrating our thought and being upon That, we unite with That, which is infinite, silent and immutable forever. By this means we are able finally to renounce the individual existence and the cosmos, where everything appears to us as a dream or illusion, maya, mithya. But the Integral Yoga seeks to

realise God, Truth and Self in the universe as well as in a state of transcendence. We shall therefore not only seek the Ineffable but also His supreme manifestation as Sachchidananda, the infinite being, consciousness and bliss embracing the universe and at play with it. We shall aspire to know, share in and become that eternal Trinity above the cosmos. But we shall also aspire to realise it in its cosmic play and participate in its universal Truth, Knowledge, Power, Love and Bliss which are the dynamic becoming of the supreme Existence.

At first we must strive to rise towards and possess the above original divine powers of the spirit and afterwards allow them to descend into us and embrace us in all our individual existence. By the descent of these powers into the mind and body, the human being is moulded into a channel of expression of the transcendent Spirit. The two movements of ascent and descent are necessary not only as means of approach and passage to the supreme Reality beyond the Manifestation, but as the condition of a divine life in the manifested world. The final outcome is that we have not only static but dynamic identity with the eternal Existence both within and beyond the universe in a supramental consciousness. There we realise this highest Reality as the silence beyond all as well as the Supreme Being who knows. contains, upholds, governs and informs all things, sarvabhutani, within the manifestation.

The integral knowledge achieves a unity of the

aims set before themselves by the three paths of knowledge, work and devotion. By the way of knowledge we realise our identity with the true, eternal, self-existent being and also with all other beings as the multiple representation of our own divine self. Knowledge reveals the self-existent as the Lord, the Ishwara, who by his supreme will creates all and governs all in all their works and movements. This vision enables us to unite our will with His and brings the possibility of doing divine action in union with the Highest and without bondage to works and their results. Again knowledge reveals the Supreme as the All-blissful, and knowing Him as our own Self, we become united with Him as the lover and the beloved. Again knowing Him too in all beings, we perceive the Beloved everywhere, enjoy a universal delight and experience the joy of universal love. Thus by the integral knowledge we unite ourselves with the three aspects of the Eternal-Knowledge, Power and Bliss-in. a supreme unified harmony.

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CHAPTER XIII

THE YOGA OF DIVINE LOVE

Love and Ananda are the last word of being, the secret of secrets, the mystery of mysteries.

Love is that by which we enter directly into possession of the self-existent delight of the divine Being.

Sri Aurobindo

Love, in its essence, is the joy of identity. It findsits final expression in the felicity of union.

Indeed he is happy who loves the Divine, because, the Divine is always with him.

The Mother

By knowledge we arrive at oneness with the Divine; it is the foundation of a constant living in the Divine.

But knowledge finds its fulfilment in love, which brings the joy, the fullness and ecstasy of the divine union. Love fulfilled does not exclude knowledge, rather it leads to perfect knowledge, which brings the integral and absolute union. Again such love is not inconsistent with, but rather throws itself with joy into, divine works. For the God-lover finds and loves the Divine in all beings and by working for, the world, he feels intensely and fulfils infinitely his love for the Divine. Thus the path of devotion leads to perfection

by union with God in the three powers of our being—love, works and knowledge. "Therefore to approach God by love is to prepare oneself for the greatest possible spiritual fulfilment."

The way of bhakti is very often supposed to be inferior to that of knowledge. The reason is that devotion is founded upon a difference, a duality of the lover and the beloved, while oneness is the highest spiritual experience. We must admit that Bhakti begins with worship, where the worshipper stands quite separate-from the object of his devotion and homage. But worship is only the first step on the path of devotion which leads ultimately to the bliss of union. Both knowledge and Bhakti end in union of the human soul with the divine Spirit. Indeed love and knowledge are equal powers, although their methods of arriving at the same goal are different. Both love and knowledge can bring us to a highest oneness; but it is love that gives to that oneness its greatest possible depth and intensity. No doubt love takes delight in a difference in oneness, but oneness itself becomes richer and sweeter by that difference. Really speaking bhakti is the complement of jnana and a means of its greatest fulfilment.

The Yoga of Bhakti as well as religion presupposes a personal God, whom the devotee can approach with

^{1.} The Synthesis of Yoga, p. 623

human emotions and by means of human relations. The Yoga starts with the worship of some Power or existence greater and higher than our limited and mortal selves. Man conceives of God as a dispenser of boons and sufferings, able and willing to help him or hurt, save and destroy. So he tries to get God on his side by praying to him, flattering him and propitiating him by means of gifts. The next step comes when the formal worship brings forth some feeling of genuine submission, awe or spiritual aspiration to which it becomes an aid or outward expression. Here too there is a gulf between the Power or Being that is worshipped and the worshipper and so one has not got to the beginning of the Yoga. For all Yoga means union or the mixing of our spirits with the divine Spirit.

The real Yoga begins with a seeking of the Divine, a longing after some kind of touch, closeness or possession. Here the outward worship becomes more and more primarily an inner worship; we begin to make ourselves a temple of the Divine, our thoughts and feelings constantly aspire and seek for Him and our whole life becomes an eternal service and worship. Here the religion of the devotee becomes a Yoga, a growing contact and union with the Divine. The third step therefore comes with the consecration of the thoughts to the Divine, a constant thinking of the Beloved, which is the inner or antaranga sadhana. This is done often with the aid of a physical image, of a

mantra or a divine name through which the divine being is realised.

The adepts speak of three stages of the seeking through the devotion of the mind; first, the constant hearing, sravanam, of the divine name, qualities and all that has been attached to them; secondly, the constant thinking, mananam, on them or on the divine being or personality; thirdly, the settling or fixing of the mind, dhyana, on the Divine who is adored. When the meditation deepens, one may pass into samadhi, an ecstatic trance, where one loses all consciousness of outward objects and becomes united with the being of the Beloved. This exclusive self-consecration of mind to the object of adoration may however lead to isolation and end in the giving up of all thought and action for the ecstasy of union with the Divine.

But in an integral Yoga, there is a wider self-consecration, where the entire being in all its-movements is offered to the Divine. The bhakta accepts the fullness of life and the world as the Lila or play of the Divine and offers up the whole being into his possession. He does all his works as an offering to Him and in all occupations his every thought remembers the Divine. His will is blissfully united with the Divine Will which he always obeys; for he feels perfect joy in the works and acts of the Beloved. Again the love of God does not turn

away from knowledge, because the whole delight of the Divine comes by a full knowledge of his entire being. As in the other Yogas, so in this too the bhakta comes to see the Divine everywhere and to love him in all men and creatures as forms of his being in the world. Thus the way of Bhakti beginning with love and delight will take into itself both knowledge and works and develop them as part of the complete joy of union with the Beloved.

But the main principle of the Yoga of Bhakti is to adopt some human relation with the Divine Being by which our soul may grow one with him in a passion of divine love. The relations usually formed with the divine through love are those of the Divine Father and the Mother with the child, of the Divine Friend or of the Lover and Beloved. But in these relations there is a gradation. We may approach the Divine as the father or the mother of our being, its source and protector, its indulgent cherisher and giver of our desires. But the relation of Father is not close, intense and passionate, and therefore it is less suitable for the seekers of closest union.

The relation of the divine Friend is sweeter and more intimate than that of the father; it admits of an equality even in inequality and of mutual self-giving as between friend and friend. When this relation becomes altogether free from personal motives, it turns into the free and

happy relation of the playmate in the divine game or lila of existence. But the relation of the mother and the child is yet closer and more intimate than that of the friend; here the love is self-existent and springs most warmly from the heart of man. The soul in all its desires and troubles goes to the Divine Mother who out of infinite love for her children offers relief and solace and fulfilment. The lover takes up any one of these relations and enjoys the delight of possession and union through love for love's sake.

But the highest and greatest relation is that of the lover and the Beloved. It springs from the yearning of the soul for its utter union with God, which is the highest fulfilment of love. All other relations start from motives that are not the pure motive of selfless love, though in the end they can arrive at that greatest goal. But here love is the beginning and the end and the whole aim of the movement. The lover does not seek for heaven or for liberation from birth or any other object but that his bhakti and love may never cease or diminish. "Here the one thing asked for is love, the one thing feared is the loss of love, the one sorrow is the sorrow of separation of love."1 There is indeed the desire of possession which means a difference; but even this is overcome in the fullness of love and union. For, the human soul seeking for

^{1.} The Synthesis of Yoga, p. 649

oneness merges into the divine and finds the utter fulfilment of its longing.

Here again the integral yogin need not follow the too exclusive method of certain purely ecstatic ways of Bhakti. He enjoys all relations known to the human personality in his soul's all-embracing contact and union with the Divine. The seeker of integral devotion will find in him a Guide and All-Knower, a Master of Force, Friend, Helper, Teacher, Father, Mother, an absolute Master of his being, his soul's Beloved and Lover. For along with devotion he follows too knowledge and works and has need of the Divine as teacher, friend, guide and master. The growing love of God will bring in him an expansion of the knowledge of God in all existences. The God-loverwill become the universal lover, who finds and embraces the All-blissful in all existences. Again he will find delight in the works and acts of his Beloved, for his own will is blissfully identified with the divine will. The bhakta will seek after perfection, because perfection is the essential nature of the Divine, and his whole being-soul, mind and life-will blossom naturally like a flower into the plenitude of divine perfection.

CHAPTER XIV

SELF-OPENING-ITS WAYS

A disclosure from within or a descent from above, these are the two sovereign ways of the Yoga-Siddhi.

By remaining psychically open to the Mother, all that is necessary for work or sadhana develops progressively, that is one of the chief secrets, the central secret of the sadhana.

Sri Aurobindo

The Divine Consciousness is at work to transform you and you must open to it in order to let it work freely in you.

The Mother

We have seen that Karmayoga leads to union with the Divine in the inner being as well as the outer life. The Yogas of Knowledge and Devotion too, when practised for integral fulfilment, may bring about both static and dynamic divine union. But the union becomes wholly real and effective only by a total transformation of the entire being and nature. On the ordinary mental or vital level, the constant presence of the Divine remains uncertain, insecure and imperfect. It is only when the supramental change takes place that the perfect truth of the divine union in action can be realised in a complete dynamic identity.

This requires an ascent into a supramental consciousness and the descent of its powers into the human vessel.

But first of all we must go inwards and enter into our inner and higher parts—the inner mind, the inner vital, the inmost soul—and bring back with us their secrets, their truths and powers, for the growth of the outer being. Or yet better, by a still more radical change of our consciousness, we must learn to live within and no longer on the surface. We should become the inner and psychic Purusha and all our actions should proceed from the inner depths and from the soul that becomes ruler of the nature. The result of such an inward living will be the elevation of our being to a higher status; but for further evolution beyond this stage we must ascend into the higher levels of the spiritual region.

The upper region includes the higher planes of Mind, the supermind and the pure spiritual domains of Sat, Chit and Ananda. The first inevitable step of this ascent would be an ascent into the higher parts of Mind. Our consciousness, if it could reach them or centre itself there, would receive something of the direct presence and power of the Spirit. Even an openness to these planes without an actual ascent or without a constant or permanent living in them, would enable us to some extent to get rid of our incapacity and ignorance. There would be a reception of their light, knowledge, will and their transforming

forces; it could also be possible to get from them a conscious communication and guidance. All this would help us to become aware of ourselves as spiritual beings and to spiritualise, though imperfectly, our normal human life and consciousness.

But even an ascent into the higher levels of Mind or a descent of powers from them is not sufficient for a complete spiritual evolution. The spirit may no doubt be realised on the lower levels of the mind, life and body, when these undergo a sufficient spiritual change. But in these realisations, the spirit is modified by the medium through which it is attained; its supreme truth manifests itself in a reflection, a diminution, a disguise, shorn of its full essential supramental light, power and splendour. They do not bring the full revelation of the Divine Presence and the divine Power in all their transcendent glory. As long as we remain in the mental regions, an imperfection always remains in the dynamic parts, they do not possess the perfect power of self-expression in life. "There is a stumbling response to the Supreme Power, a veil over the face of the Divine, a constant mixture of the Ignorance."1 Moreover we must become not only recipients, channels, instruments of the Divine Shakti, but part and parcel of her supreme Light, Force and Ananda

^{1.} The Synthesis of Yogu, p. 288

in an abiding experience. Such complete identity or fusion of our being and nature with the Supernature. takes place on the higher level of the supermind.

Therefore it becomes imperative that we should get beyond the mental into the supramental and the supreme spiritual nature. We must ascend into the supramental planes and bring their powers into life for a radical change of our human existence. So we shall discuss here the yogic processes of the twofold self-opening, one inward for the light that comes from within and the other upward for our ascent to higher levels of consciousness. We have also to speak of the resulting downward movement of descent of consciousness for transformation of the human into the divine nature.*

PART-I

Yoga means union with the Divine. But that union can be achieved only by two yogic movements of the consciousness, one inward and the other upward. The outer being comprised of the exterior mind, life and body is much too small, ignorant and

^{* &}quot;There is no fixed rule in such things. With many the descent comes first and the ascension afterwards, with others it is the other way; with some the two processes go together."—The Mother India, December, '61

limited and fond of outward objects to arrive at the union. No spiritual life is indeed possible as long as one is bounded by the movements of the lower self. Our true self lies however not on the surface but deep within or high above. To realise the Divine, an opening to the inner being is a first necessity. The inner self—the inner mental, inner vital and inner physical—lies hidden behind the surface consciousness. It has greater powers and greater knowledge than the limited self on the surface.

The subliminal self is calm, wide and peaceful; its opening brings peace, freedom, wideness and control over the nature. The new consciousness attained by this opening also brings new possibilities of progress—it opens inwardly to the soul or psychic, it opens above to the Self or Spirit. Once the inner being manifests, the inmost psychic entity comes forward to take up its work of psychic transformation of the nature. Besides it helps to universalise the being and thus break the limits of the ego. The awakened inner self also invites the descent of the higher Consciousness—its Peace, Silence, Light, Knowledge and Ananda into the Adhara. To become conscious with the inner consciousness is therefore a capital though a primary movement in the Yoga.

Man living in the ego identifies himself with the outer personality. His egotism is the cause of his limitation and bondage to the nature. It is the wall

that separates him from the inner and higher self. To become aware of the inner self, one must draw back from the outer consciousness and go inside and awake in the hidden parts of the being. One should concentrate⁺ for the purpose in the heart centre, which is also the seat of the psychic. "There is a sense of going in or deep down, a feeling of the movement towards inner depths; there is often a stillness, a pleasant numbness, a stiffness of the limbs." This does not mean loss of consciousness, which recedes from the outward objects and passes into the inner mental or vital part of the being.

The movement inwards is followed by a movement outwards; the inner being comes to the front and takes hold of the outer self to convert it to its own higher workings. The two movements are 'mutually complementary' processes of the inner self-opening. "Both movements are necessary, the coming out of the inner being to the front as well as the going in of the consciousness to become aware of the inner self and nature." The final outcome is the crossing of the border or the piercing of the veil between the outer consciousness and the inner being, which is "one of the crucial movements in yoga." Once the barrier is broken by either of the movements, all the processes

^{1.} Letters, Vol. I, p. 191

^{2.} Ibid, pp. 193-4

and operations necessary to the yoga come within the reach of the sadhaka. They no longer seem difficult or impossible as now to the outer being, which becomes full of the inner consciousness.

There is a stage in the sadhana in which the inner being begins to awake. This awakening is often indicated by the hearing of sounds of bells, crickets, etc. and the seeing of lights and colour. Another indication is an opening to sights and sounds of other planes than the physical. The awakneing of the inner being is also associated with the opening of the chakras or yogic centres in the subtle body. The outer personality is connected with the inner by certain centres of consciousness. These centres are for the most part closed or asleep; we have to open them and make them awake and active by means of yoga. As the centres open, the inner being comes forward with all its powers and possibilities. The inner self detaches itself from mind, life and body and feels itself as something separate from them. We become aware of ourselves as the Purusha—the inner self of mind, manomaya purusha, or the inner self of life, pranamaya purusha, or a subtle self supporting the body, annamaya purusha. Or else it is simply the whole Purusha consciousness separate from the whole Prakriti without any location.

The above realisation brings the liberation of the Purusha from its bondage to the lower nature. The

inner being takes the attitude of an impartial spectator or observer and remains tranquil, unmoved, detached from the outward existence. By becoming separate, we live in the calm, peace and wideness of the true being and are no longer identified with, and subject to, the surface ignorant prakriti. Here the Purusha may reject the whole action of Nature and withdraw into pure conscious existence. Or he may move towards perfection and become the master of the nature, Ishwara, who controls and determines her movements. This control can be truly obtained by rising above the mind into an identity with the spirit, which is the lord of nature by its intrinsic power. Then only can man become a self-conscious soul, superior to and master of the mind, life and body.

Again the inner being is in direct touch with the universal mind, the universal life-forces, the universal physical forces. So by the inner opening we come in direct contact with the cosmic forces that play through and around us. We also become directly aware of, and united with, the universal consciousness above the limitations of the external self. We are then liberated from the cramping smallness and sufferings of the gross physical body. We are no longer little separate personalities with limited lives but become centres of a universal action with a boundless existence. Moreover, we can to a certain extent become masters of the play of nature.

For when the inner Purusha awakes, it begins to observe, control and mould the actions and formations of mind and life and body. Above all, the inner opening leads us forward to the next higher movements of the conciousness. By this we can become directly aware of our soul, put ourselves in harmony with it and come in direct touch with the Divine Light and the Divine Force.

The inward self-opening must be supplemented by an upward opening. The ordinary consciousness must rise upwards to meet the higher planes above the head. The upward movement is "the ascending of the lower consciousness in the adhar to meet the greater consciousness above." When the being opens upwards, then the mind, emotional being, vital, even something of the subtle physical begin to ascend in order to join themselves to the divine consciousness above. This rising to a higher level is called the ascension of the lower consciousness. There is a feeling of the consciousness surging up and mounting to the head sometimes in currents or waves and sometimes in a less concrete motion. The process is analogous to the awakening of the Kundalini, the contral bodily Power in the Tantric system. The Kundalini lies coiled up and latent in the centre at the bottom of the spine called muladhara. On waking up it mounts through the spinal cord and the different chakras centres of consciousness to meet the Divine in

the cerebral centre called sahasrara or thousandpetalled lotus.

But in the Purna Yoga the ascent is not a specialised process; it is not a gradated movement from centre to centre, but "a spontaneous uprush of the whole lower consciousness". The ascent takes place spontaneously according to the need by the force of the aspiration. The consciousness after a time ascends through the summit of the head to the higher regions above the mind. This ascent above the body to the overhead planes, called overhead ascension, is necessary for reaching the plane of the Supermind which brings about a more integral union with the Divine. But the ascent in order to be effective must be frequent and at last permanent. For this purpose, there must be a sufficient aspiration in all the various mental, vital and physical planes. All must be weaned from their lower ignorant modes of working in the nature and join the higher consciousness above.

The movement of ascent brings many important results. One of them is the liberation from the body consciousness, which is essential for the Yoga. The individual consciousness breaks its limits on rising to the higher planes which are wide and illimitable. As a result one feels no longer in the body, but above it or else spread out in wideness all around. The consciousness no longer bound by the external self enters into the inner regions and one becomes aware of the

inner self—the inner mental, inner vital and inner physical being—and the inmost psychic. The inner being again opens to the Self or Spirit above by union with which one achieves freedom and gains mastery over the nature. This Self above the head has two aspects, one static and the other dynamic. The former stands back detached from all activities, though it impartially supports them. The experience of this aspect leads to peace, silence and liberation from the cosmic existence.

The dynamic aspect of the self overhead is experienced as a cosmic Self or Spirit which not only supports but originates and contains all activities. But we may also realise it as the transcendent self above the cosmos. This realisation again may lead to that complete liberation from the world existence which is called laya or Nirvana. But Nirvana is not the only end of the upward opening. At first the sadhak is aware of a great or even an infinite peace, silence and wideness spreading everywhere above him. But afterwards the higher spiritual or Divine Consciousness with, its Peace, Power, Light and Ananda may descend into the individual being. Then the sadhak has the dynamic realisation of the transcendence, which is the secure basis of the life divine on earth.

The descent of the higher consciousness is the culminating movement of the Yoga. The descending movement lies in bringing down the light and power

of the higher planes into all the levels of our lower nature. The higher powers descend when there is a 'receptive quietude' in the whole being. The sadhaka has to keep his consciousness as quiet and still as possible to receive the descending power. "This descent is felt as a pouring in of calm and peace, of force and power, of light, of joy and ecstasy, of wideness and freedom and knowledge, of a Divine Being or a Presence—sometimes one of these, sometimes several of them or all together."

The descent takes place to drive out the Powers of darkness and ignorance and transform the nature. The mind, vital and body by coming into touch with the higher planes imbibe their peace, silence, power and joy.

When the higher consciousness descends, the mind is governed from the higher planes and becomes wide in consciousness not limited by the body. The vital also grows wide like the mind and its restless movements are quieted down. The vital desire is transmuted into a divine desire for enjoyment of God in the world, "the Ananda of the spirit in things." The will becomes a perfect instrument for more and more luminous and infallible action. The mental will is gradually replaced by a higher will and all impulsions for action come from the higher sources. Even the imprisoned physical consciousness losing its limitation

^{1.} Letters, Vol. I, p, 192

becomes wide and plastic and even infinite. The descent into the material body brings light, consciousness, force, Ananda into the cells and all the physical movements. The body becomes conscious and vigilant and performs the right movements; it obeys the higher will and becomes an effective instrument for divine work.

The discipline required for self-opening, as already stated, is the practice of concentration of consciousness in its two main centres. Concentration in the heart centre (the cardiac centre in the middle of the chest) is 'the natural beginning'. It brings about the opening of the psychic being which is the divine element in the individual. One has to concentrate with the aspiration for this inward opening and for the Presence in the heart with an offering of oneself to the Divine. By constant practice the soul centre opens and the psychic comes forward to govern the external nature and turn it and all its movements towards the Divine. Then we become aware of the Divine within us and of the higher consciousness and the Truth above us. We have the sense of union with the Mother, her presence in the heart and the action of her force in the nature. The whole being undergoes a psychic change and is filled with deep peace, ecstasy, love and devotion.

The other way of self-opening lies in concentration in the head or the overhead centre. "To concentrate in the head with the aspiration for quietude in the mind and the realisation of the Self and Divine above

is the second way of concentration", This practice after silencing the surface mind opens up the inner mind which is larger, deeper and more capable of receiving spiritual experiences and spiritual knowledge. But concentration in the head, that is, the mental centre, is only a preparation for ascending to the centre above the head. Otherwise one cannot surpass the limits of the mind and its experiences and rise into the higher spiritual planes to live in their infinity. The lower consciousness after some practice mounts upward and passing beyond the lid that confines it to the body reaches the overhead centre. "There it begins to come into contact with the universal Self, the Divine Peace, Light, Power, Knowledge, Bliss, to enter into that, to feel the descent of these things into the nature."2

The two openings, inner and upper, together form the principal discipline of the Yoga. They are "the two sovereign ways of the Yoga-siddhi" and indispensable for the purpose of the Integral Yoga. The ascending movement culminates in a descent from the above. All that belongs to the higher consciousness—its Light, Power, Knowledge, Ananda—comes by a descent from above. All these descend first into the psychic and then through the inner self radiate to other parts of

^{1.} On Yoga II, Tome One, p. 492

^{2.} Letters, Vel I. p. 68

the being. Hence the principal thing is the opening of the heart centre and of the head centre-the former opening to the inmost psychic being and the latter to the higher consciousness above. "Neither of these two movements, the psychic and the spiritual, is complete without the other. If the spiritual ascent and descent are not made, the spiritual transformation of the nature cannot happen; if the full psychic opening and connection (with the outer nature) is not made, the transformation cannot be complete."1 The two movements go together, supplement each other and work in unison for a dynamic realisation of the Divine. The siddhi or fulfilment of the Yoga comes when the psychic being receives into itself the Supramental Consciousness to complete its work of transformation.

PART-II

Concentration of the consciousness is one method of doing yoga for inner or upper self-opening. The other method is to open the consciousness simply and without effort to the Divine Influence or the Force of the Divine Mother by an attitude of receptiveness in the being. This opening is a psychic condition of

^{1.} Correspondence with Sri Aurobindo, second series, p. 11

meditation, which is "a state of inner rest, not of straining, of quiet opening, not of eager or desperate pulling, + a harmonious giving of oneself to the Divine Force for its workings and in that a sense of the Force working and a restful confidence and allowing it to work without any unquiet interference." The best way of receiving is not to pull but to give oneself entirely so that the Force may enter and do its work of transformation. An eager pulling or straining is tainted with egoism that shuts the door against its easy and smooth descent. The consciousness must remain turned to the Mother ready to receive what may come from the Divine. The sadhak must keep himself free from all things that obstruct or prevent the working of the Force. He must remain quiet, happy and confident and let the Force work in him, guide him and give him knowledge, peace and Ananda.

The success in Yoga depends mainly upon one's capacity to open to the Divine Mother and receive her action and working within the adhara. To become or remain open, the sadhak must possess or develop the following psychic capacities; the faith that the divine force and consciousness are around and within him always; a constant aspiration to remain in touch with the Consciousness; a will to receive the force

^{1.} Letters, Vol. II, p. 384

¹⁴

and influence and to utilise them for progress; the power to reject all that stands in the way of his receiving them or of their action within for change of the nature. Besides he should have openness in work, which means that the work is associated with the Mother's thought and done as an offering to her and in the faith that he can do it through her force. Aspiration, prayer, call to the Mother for help are all very helpful for getting or retaining the psychic openness which is "the door of the definite entrance." Sri Aurobindo says, "It is only those who are capable by aspiration and meditation on the Mother to open and receive her action and working within that can succeed in this Yega."

The result of the above discipline for self-opening through the psychic will be the opening of the heart centre and the opening of the mind centres, which are the two most important achievements in the sadhana. When the heart centre opens, the psychic comes out and one begins to feel the Mother's power and presence within and the action of her Force in the nature. The Force works in the psychic, mental, vital and the physical plane to purify and psychically change the consciousness. By the opening of the mind centres, the Mother's higher powers above, the Forces of the higher consciousness, come down into the adhar and

^{1.} Sri Aurobindo on Himself and on the Mother, p. 478

work there to transform the being and nature into a higher spiritual existence. Evidently, the two essential gains here are the opening of the psychic being and descent of the higher consciousness into the awakened psychic; for the nexus between the two is the principal means of the siddhi in the Integral Yoga.

Sri Aurobindo says, "To be open is simply to be so turned to the Mother that her Force can work in you without anything refusing or obstructing her action."1 The sadhak must reject all that obstructs the working of the Mother's force or prevents him from feeling her nearness or her presence within. He should be vigilant and see that there are no movements of disturbance, desire or ego. The mind must give up its own ideas and preferences and accept willingly the Light and the truth coming down from above. The vital rejecting its false desires and motives must admit the true initiative and impulsions of the Divine Power. The physical instead of being shut up in its habits and inertia must allow the Light and Force to enter and work in it. Such complete opening in all parts and in all movements is not possible at the beginning. The full opening takes time and comes about after some struggle owing to the resistance of the human nature. But one must have an aspiration or will in each part to turn to the Mother and receive

^{1.} Sri Aurobindo on Himself and on the Mother, p. 480

her working for its own transformation. One must persevere always, call always for help and then after each difficulty there will be a progress. Sri Aurobindo says, "The progress in the Yoga and the siddhi in the Yoga depend upon the degree to which there is the opening."

According to Sri Aurobindo the psychic opening, as set out above, is the easiest and simplest and most direct way to the Divine. But certain conditions have to be fulfilled for the opening of the being to the Divine Influence or the Mother's Force. Sri Aurobindo says, "The effort demanded of the sadhak is that of aspiration, rejection and surrender. If these three are done the rest is to come of itself by the Grace of the Mother and the working of her force in you. But of the three the most important is surrender of which the first necessary form is trust and confidence and patience in difficulty."²

Aspiration is the first requisite for all siddhi in Yoga; but it is difficult to keep it constantly owing to the inertia, tamas, that prevails in the lower parts. If the sadhak cannot remain open, he should aspire constantly but quietly that he may remain open. But the aspiration should be not only in the psychic but in all parts of the nature down to the physical.

^{1.} Letters of Sri Aurobindo on the Mother, p. 483

^{2.} Ibid, p. 48

Even when aspiration fails because of the pressure of inertia, he should not lose trust and confidence and patience. The right attitude is not to despond but keep up the faith that the Mother will carry one through all the difficulties. Along with the aspiration there must be the rejection of all that stands in the way of the sadhana. The mind must consent to give up its cherished thoughts and ideas, the vital its desires and demands and the physical its fixed habits and inertia.

But surrender or self-giving is the most important condition of self-opening. "There is not much spiritual meaning in keeping open to the Mother if you withhold your surrender. Self-giving or surrender is demanded of those who practise this Yoga, because without such a progressive surrender of the being it is quite impossible to get anywhere near the goal. To keep open means to call in her Force to work in you, and if you do not surrender to it, it amounts to not allowing the Force to work in you at all or else only on condition that it will work in the way you want and not in its own way which is the way of the Divine Truth."1 An opening can never be effective unless it is backed by surrender; for the Mother's Force will withdraw, if our nature is unwilling to accept its influence or guidance and control.

^{1.} Sri Aurobindo on Himself and on the Mother, p. 493

But submission and surrender must be made sincere, real and complete. To be sincere one must be free from all vital attachments to family, child or anybody or anything else. The only desire and aspiration of the sadhak should be to receive the spiritual Truth and manifest it in all his thoughts, feelings, actions and nature. Besides surrender must be active and not passive or tamasic. "Tamasic surrender is when one says, I won't do anything; let Mother do everything. Aspiration, rejection, surrender even are not necessary. Let her do all that in me." True surrender is that of the aspirant who does his best to carry out the Mother's will and adheres to his sadhana. He is always ready to follow her guidance and allows no other force except hers to influence or lead him.

Sri Aurobindo most emphatically tells us to take the attitude of psychic openness. It is the straight sunlit path where the Divine upbears the sadhak secretly at first and openly at a later stage of the sadhana. But whether one can be open or not, one has to remain loyal and fatihful. What is needed is obedience to the Mother's Force and rejection of all contrary influence or impulse. One must act according to what the inner being says would be the Mother's will. By this practice the mind will grow quiet and then one will become able to call

^{1.} Sri Aurobindo on Himself and on the Mother, p. 497

the Mother and open to her. When the consciousness entirely opens, one feels all the actions originating from the Divine Source. There is no longer any need of personal effort, which is progressively transformed into a movement of the Divine Force.

Sri Aurobindo repeatedly advises us to have faith in and to rely upon the Mother's working for the fulfilment of the Yoga. He says, "There is no method in this yoga except to concentrate, preferably in the heart, and call the presence and power of the Mother to take up the being and by the working of her force transform the consciousness."

^{1.} On Yoga II, Tome One, p. 581

CHAPTER XV

PSYCHIC REALISATION

The psychic being coming to the front and staying there is the decisive movement in the Yoga.

The psychic is the divine element in the individual being and its characteristic power is to turn everything towards the Divine.

Sri Aurobindo

You carry the Divine within you, you have only to enter within yourself and you will find Him.

The psychic being is constantly and invariably in contact with the Divine and never loses this contact,

The Mother

The soul or psychic is a 'spark of the Divine Fire' in the individual. It is the representative form of the Jivatman put out for the purposes of evolution. The Jivatman is the individual self standing above the evolution; it is essentially one self with all selves. The psychic is specially 'the soul of the individual' taking part in the evolution. It is the Purusha behind the heart or antaratman that uses the evolving mind, vital and body as its instruments for divine expression. The psychic essence grows and develops as the psychic being or chaitya purusha behind the nature to its full

divinity as a portion of the Divine. So it is not immutable like the Jivatman which is always the same.

The psychic being or 'soul individuality' is part of the soul formed by it in course of its evolution. The soul has two aspects, one behind and the other in the front, that is, in the surface being. Sri Aurobindo says, "There is always a part of the mind, of the vital, of the body which is or can be influenced by the psychic: they can be called the psychic-mental, the psychic-vital, the psychic-physical."1 At first these parts are no more than a nucleus-small, weak, covered up and inactive. But with every higher movement or spiritual experience they begin to develop and become larger, stronger, more prominent and active. By this process of evolution, the psychic gradually attains the status of an individual person or purusha having mental, vital and physical powers of expression in life activities. The psychic being is therefore the soul in nature that develops with the evolving mind, life and body. Truly speaking, the soul being a portion of the Divine can have no growth or change; it is the psychic that is progressive and develops through its many experiences in human lives. The fulfilment comes when the psychic attains its own universality and unites with the Self or liva above the nature.

^{1.} On Yoga II, Tome Two, p. 272

The psychic is made of peace, purity and heavenly bliss. Nothing can disturb its peace, pollute its purity or interrupt its self-bliss or extinguish its flame of aspiration. It is perfectly luminous and directly aware of truth of being and truth of nature. The psychic is deeply conscious of truth and good and beauty, because these things are native to its own character. It is also aware of all that contradicts these things, of all that is false, evil, ugly and unseemly. The function of the psychic is to offer all things to the Divine for transformation. It evolves the individual nature until it is able to transform the Prakriti of Ignorance into a Prakriti of Knowledge. On each plane it has to work "so as to help each to awaken to the true truth and the Divine Reality."

The psychic is the real though secret cause of our turning to the spiritual life. At each moment it indicates the method, the way, the steps that will help us to grow into the Divine consciousness. It leads us step by step from the mental human to the spiritual and thence to the supramental consciousness and existence. It brings direct contact with the Divine, reveals the Divine Presence everywhere and finally brings the vision of the Divine Himself. We have therefore to bring the psychic from behind the veil of the ignorant nature to the front or surface being in the Yoga. Sri Aurobindo says, "If the inmost soul is awakened, if there is a new birth out of the mere

mental, vital and physical into the psychic consciousness, then this Yoga can be done; otherwise (by the sole power of the mind or any other part) it is impossible."1

The psychic being is full of the knowledge. power, love and delight of the supramental plane. Hence the psychic alone has true knowledge, true power and true bhakti. The mind gives only a mental knowledge about spiritual things. But true knowledge, which means an inner perception of the truth, comes from the Self within or the Self above. Again true love for God or the Guru comes from the psychic. The mental or vital bhakti makes its own conditions for surrender and demands its own satisfaction. But the psychic love or bhakti is free from all selfish demands; it is a pure spiritual love and has no egoistic claims. The psychic obeys itself with utter the Truth fully and offers devotion. It knows truly the Divige will and follows it implicitly casting away all other motive power or incentive to action. Moreover, the psychic alone has the power to rule and create an order in the being by its pure, wise and powerful working from within. True control over the nature can be achieved not by the effort of the mind but by the coming forward of the psychic, who is the real ruler of the being.

As the psychic is the divine element within us,

^{1.} On Yoga II, Tome Two, p. 207

it is in direct touch with the Divine Being who is above our limited personality. Therefore we must become conscious of our psychic soul in order to reach the supreme Origin of our embodied existence. Sadhana by help of the awakened psychic is comparatively easy and free from difficulties. When the mind or vital leads the sadhana, there are often disturbances and dark periods between bright ones. The psychic on the other hand keeps on progressing in an unbroken line, its movement is a continuous ascension to higher heights. The psychic brings life and joy in the prayer and aspiration; there come to the sadhana Love and Beauty and Ananda. It imposes the law of sacrifice on all the outer members and brings about an integral surrender of the entire being. A constant stream of Bhakti wells up out of a complete psychic surrender, which by calling down the Divine Grace and guidance removes all difficulties. Then the Yoga instead of being a hard sorrowful journey along the dry desert becomes a smooth joyful passage along a smiling valley. Hence the psychic way has been called the sunlit path of yoga, where "a great joy and sweetness are the note of the whole sadhana."

But the psychic is at first very much veiled by the outer consciousness. We are not aware of the luminous and ever pure flame of the divinity within us. All responses to noble feelings, acceptance of higher truths and demands for uplifting ideals come from the secret Light within us. But the mind is not aware of the source and follows its own judgment and preferences or obeys the urge of the vital ego. The psychic is unable to control the nature or express its truth and movements. It is not always able to prevail against the obscurity of the physical being, the mistaken sureness of the mind or the forceful driving of the vital nature. It has to depend on the mind, life and body for its expression and cannot freely use them as its instruments.

But as the psychic grows stronger, it becomes more capable of exercising control. The natural process of soul emergence as indicated above is slow and long. The psychic has to labour with endless patience and perseverance to liberate and increase the divine element in all the instruments of its expression. The process can only be expedited, when by Yoga one becomes aware of the soul and brings it to the front and makes it master of the life and action. Sri Aurobindo says, "When we say that the psychic being has come to the surface, we mean that it has begun to exert its influence on the other members of a man's nature. It becomes first an active influence and ultimately the influence in the being. And the result of the influence is to turn the whole nature towards the Truth."

At a certain stage in the Yoga when the mind

^{1.} Evening Talks with Sri Aurobindo, second series, p. 194

is sufficiently quieted, the vital has been subdued and the physical lifted somewhat out of its obscurity and inertia, the inmost psychic being comes forward to illumine and control the rest of the being. When the psychic opens, one feels that there is a twofold being, the inner psychic which is the true one and the outer self leading the outward life. Here the soul emerging from the nature assumes its divine status as the Purusha above the nature and its modes of working, gunatita. The one important thing however is to live always in the psychic, the divine part of the being. We have to know ourselves as the soul, to identify ourselves with it and constantly feel its living presence.

The sadhana that we have to do here is to concentrate all our thought on the psychic Self in order that we may become aware of it as our true being that is immortal in a mortal frame. The main condition of the soul's emergence however is a change of position of the consciousness. "The consciousness has to shift its centre and its static and dynamic position from the surface to the inner being; it is there that we must find the foundation for our thought, life and action. For to stand outside on our surface and to receive from the inner being and follow its intimations is not a sufficient transformation; one must cease to be the surface personality and become the inner Person, the Purusha."

^{1.} The Life Divine, Vol. II (2), p. 931

But the identification of ourselves with the psychic soul, a constant living in the higher self, is difficult of achievement, because the outer nature clings to its own poise and habitual mode of living. false ego-sense must be annulled and the outer nature cleansed of its many impure thoughts, feelings and willings, before one can pass into the psychic centre and begin to dwell in its consciousness. "The outer nature has to undergo a change of poise, a quieting, a purification and fine mutation of its substance and energy by which the many obstacles in it rarefy, drop away or otherwise disappear; it then becomespossible to pass through to the depths of our being and from the depths so reached a new consciousness can be formed, both behind the exterior self and in it, joining the depths to the surface."1 beings, inner and outer, are thus united together, harmonised and gradually integrated. The psychic comes forward from behind the veil, its presence is felt in the waking daily consciousness, aware of the inmost soul as our true being. We become aware of our divinity, infinity and immortality and we are freed from our subjection to the lower nature. The awakened psychic takes up the lead of the sadhana and brings about an alchemic change of all the inner and outer life.

^{1.} The Life Divine, Vol. II (2), p. 932

The most important thing in the psychic realisation is the change of the ordinary egoistic into the spiritual soul consciousness. We no longer identify ourselves with the nature-mind, life or body-but become one with the soul which is part of the eternal divine consciousness. There is a reversal of consciousness; we no longer feel that the soul is within the body but outside it, in which the body exists as a mere speck or point within its larger ambit. With this realisation comes the certitude of immortality,"the concrete experience that we have lived always and shall live for ever. We see that the soul does not perish, only the external forms are cast out in a constant rebirth like clothes that are thrown away when worn out. Next comes the sense of universality, of limitless expansion in space; for the soul is not a limited person but part of the universal consciousness. At the beginning the soul is no bigger than a thumb, angustha matram, but afterwards it spreads out and becomes one with the universe. What was anu or a minute particle extends and expands, until it embraces the whole existence and becomes bibhu or all-inclusive soul, mahadatma

The psychic opening results in a psychic change or psychicisation of the whole being. The psychic throws out all impurities and turns the ordinary consciousness and the outer nature altogether towards the Divine. It purifies thought, perception, emotion, sensation, action and everything else in us and prepares them to be divine movements. The outer nature cannot even with great difficulty become aware of or get rid of its wrong movements. But with the psychic awake and in front, control becomes comparatively easy and difficulties diminish and then disappear. The psychic brings an automatic perception of the true and unture, the divine and undivine, the good and evil. It exposes the false mental and vital movements, which fall away and become powerless to create trouble or obstruct the sadhana.

The psychic on awakening communicates to every element its force of one-pointed aspiration, trust, and surrender. Gradually the mind, vital and physical become full of the psychic light and truths and sound feeling and purity. The mind develops a direct vision of the Truth, the heart overflows with deep devotion and the will consecrates itself to the service of the Divine. The outer being becomes an instrument for divine action, it accepts the law of sacrifice of all its works as an offering to the Divine and Eternal. Always it lives in touch with the Divine and expresses the Divine in all its movements. The whole being opens to the spiritual Self, the Ishwara and the Divine Shakti. The psychic thus evolves the ignorant human nature until it is able to transform it into the divine nature. "When the psychic being can by sadhana become

dominant and freely use its instruments, then the impulse towards the Divine becomes complete and the transformation of mind, vital and body, not merely their liberation, becomes possible."

The psychic development and psychic change of nature are of utmost importance in the integral Yoga. For the whole being has to rise and join the higher consciousness and the higher has to descend into the lower for its transformation. The psychic change makes the being ready for the ascent and descent of consciousness for a spiritual transformation. It supports the process of transformation by removing all resistance from the lower nature. It makes safe and easy the ascent of the higher spiritual consciousness. For the ascent does not take place readily and the descent becomes dangerous unless the nature is purified by the transforming action of the psychic being and made ready for its higher evolution.

The psychic by force of its single-minded aspiration brings the presence or nearness of the Mother and constant contact with her. One feels the Mother's Force possessing the entire being and originating all its movements. At length the Force comes down from the above and by its direct action brings on both liberation and perfection. The descent of the Supermind also

^{1.} On Yoga II, Tome One, p. 302

cannot be effectuated or ensured without the psychic awakening. For the psychic alone can receive its influence with a complete receptivity and right attitude. The mind, vital and physical do not so easily respond to it; moreover they spoil the influence by mixing with it their own untruth. Sri Aurobindo says, "The supramental change can take place only if the psychic is awake and is made the chief support of the descending supramental power."

But what are the effective means of the psychic awakening and opening? We should note here a distinction that is sometimes drawn between awakening and opening. Awakening means awareness of the psychic by going inward so that one lives in its consciousness. Opening means the coming to the front of the psychic and its direct control over the nature. Quietude, peace and silence in the mind and the vital part of the being are the first necessity for reaching or plunging in the psychic. The opening of the psychic centre is possible only when the mind and vital are free from all restless and disturbing movements. 'All unruly thoughts, egoistic desires, vital demands and worldly attachments are great obstacles on the way to the psychic. On the other hand, the opposite movements of aspiration, of psychic devotion, of self-giving to the Divine are powerful aids to the psychic opening.

^{1.} On Yoga II, Tome One, foot-note, p. 307

Sri Aurobindo says, "Aspiration, constant and sincere, and the will to turn to the Divine alone are the best means to bring forward the psychic."1 intense aspiration calls down the Divine Grace that removes all obstacles and brings realisation by its own miraculous action. The aspiration however must be not merely a central feeling in the mind or the heart but spread to the whole nature. The whole being must ask for the thing, aspire for it, want it as it wants nothing else. Again one must keep a firm central will for the psychic realisation. A strong and constant resolve to succeed is a mighty power for victory here as in the other fields of sadhana. "The one thing to do is to keep the mantra of success, the determination of victory, the fixed resolve: Have it I must and have it I will."2.

The Mother asserts that the psychic fire is lighted by the will to progress, the will to purify ourselves and by the urge towards perfection. She says, "Those who have a strong will, if they turn themselves towards spiritual progress, automatically kindle the fire within them." Bhakti and surrender also are very effective means of the opening. Bhakti a great motive force for the sadhana and the best means of the psychic

^{1.} Letters, Vol. 11, p. 98

^{2.} Sri Aurobindo came to Me by Dilip Kumar Roy

^{3.} Bulletin, Pondicherry, August '62

realisation. The psychic feeling of Bhakti, an intense passion for the Divine, purifies the being by removing desires, demands, passions and all erratic movements of the will and emotion. The inmost psychic soul full of love for the Divine finds an easy outlet by virtue of the purification and Godward movement of the emotional being in the heart. The more intense the love and bhakti, the greater is the force for psychic opening and transformation of the nature. "A constant thinking of the Divine, an unebbing flow of the heart's purest emotions to the Supreme Lover and an unflagging self-offering to His Force in every part of the being are a great help to the opening of the psychic being and its coming to the front."1

Again a pure motiveless devotion brings surrender which removes all desire and ego, the two great obstacles to the psychic opening. Surrender is indeed the greatest power of all that opens the door to the psychic. A simple and sincere self-offering without any kind of egoistic turn or insincerity of motive is the most favourable condition for an entire opening of the psychic. Sri Aurobindo says, "The method of detachment from the insistence of all mental and vital and physical claims and calls and impulsions, a concentration in the heart, austerity, self-purification and

^{1.} The Integral Yoga of Sri Aurobindo by Rishabchand

rejection of the old mind movements and life movements, rejection of the ego of desire, rejection of false needs and false habits, are all useful aids to this difficult passage: but the strongest, most central way is to found all such or other methods on a self-offering and surrender of ourselves and of our parts of nature to the Divine Being, the Ishwara. A strict obedience to the wise and intuitive leading of a Guide is also normal and necessary for all but a few specially gifted seekers."

Concentration of consciousness in the heart, as stated elsewhere, is one effective yogic method of awakening the psychic being. This process is mainly one of tapasya, as it requires a spiritual effort; for one has to focuss and fix the mind not only upon the heartcentre but also upon an idea or an image within the centre. Here one may adopt the Vedantic method of concentration upon the idea, "I am not the body, life or mind: I am the conscious soul, chinmaya atmaever free and pure, beyond death, sin and suffering." At the same time the consciousness should be drawn upwards and fixed upon the heart-centre behind which lies the seat of the psychic soul. The mind after some practice will bring the realisation of the divine soul, the conscious being different from the mechanical nature. Afterwards the experience comes that the

^{1.} The Life Divine, Vol. II(2), pp. 935-6

soul pervades the universe, and one perceives the truth revealed by the Vedanta that the soul is Brahman, ayamatma brahma.

Another method of concentration is to go inwards to the psychic centre deep within behind the inner being which lies just beneath the surface nature. One feels as if he were moving deep down into a well or abyss till he reaches the central place of the psychic. There one may take the help of an image for keeping the mind fixed upon the centre. The image may be that of a white light or a burning lamp or a religious symbol such as the wheel, the cross, the Omkara, the crescent moon, etc. according to one's option. The Mother speaks of the image of a bronze door which one tries to push open by repeated efforts. When the door opens, one finds oneself in a new region of luminous consciousness which is that of the psychic. The practice should be continued until the psychic tears the veil that covers it and comes out to the front to change the imperfect lower nature and to call down into it the higher consciousness and nature from the above.

Yet another method is to concentrate in the heartcentre with the aspiration for the Divine Presence there. One has to conceive the image of a god or goddess such as Krishna, Shiva, Kali, etc. or of an avatar, incarnation of the Divine, such as Buddha, Christ, Sri Aurobindo or the Divine Mother. Or

else the image may be the form of the guru or of a holy saint who claims the heart's love and devotion. One helpful device is the repetition of a mantram appropriate to the personality invoked for manifestation in the heart. The Presence will reveal itself in time and permeate the conscious and subconscious ranges of the nature. The psychic will open of itself and co-operating with the liberating light and effective force of the Presence will bring about a psychic and spiritual change of the nature. "Aspiration, prayer, bhakti, love, surrender are the main support of this part of the sadhana-accompanied by a rejection of all that stands in the way of what we aspire for."1 The Presence may however come as a result of the psychic opening or by a descent from the higher regions. Sri Aurobindo says that the emergence of the psychic and the growth of the Divine Presence are the two sure signs of our inner conversion, a complete turning of the human nature towards the Divine.

The psychic may also open by a descent of the forces of the Higher Consciousness from the above. Here we have to concentrate first in the head, the mental centre, and afterwards in the overhead centre. On going upwards the ordinary consciousness comes in contact and unites with the Peace, Light, Force, Bliss of the higher levels, which afterwards

^{1.} On Yoga II, Tome Two, p. 278

descend into the nature and the body. The descent of these things liberates the heart-centre, opens the psychic and works for the perfection of nature. Here however the opening comes in an indirect way beginning from what is above. The direct opening comes by concentration in the heart and is naturally more effective. But when it is difficult to do it, as in certain natures, one has to adopt the indirect method of calling down a descent from above. One may concentrate in the heart on in the head or in both alternately according to the natural bias or inclination of the hour. The two openings, inward and upward. are the double foundation of the Yoga, one resulting in the psychic and the other in the spiritual transformation. "The best way is to aspire for both and let the Mother's Force work it out according to the need and turn of the nature "1

Broadly speaking, there are two ways of the psychic as of all other realisation, namely, tapasya and surrender. Of these two surrender is apparently the easier way; for surrender involves dependence upon the Divine rather than on one's own efforts alone for the realisation. Moreover, it calls down more quickly the Divine Grace, which is indispensable for siddhi in the supramental Yoga. But all cannot at once grow into the attitude of complète surrender;

^{1.} On Yoga II, Tome Two, p. 205

for the process involves the rejection of ego and all undivine movements of the nature. The Mother says that of the two methods tapasya at first seems to be easier; for it is more or less a mechanical practice, whereas surrender requires abnegation of the separative self, which is a difficult psychological discipline. The two methods should however be combined, if possible, in order to obtain the entire results of the sadhana for psychic realisation. But whatever the method followed, the psychic opening is an indispensable step for integral liberation and transformation of the consciousness and the nature. This realisation is the foundation upon which can be built securely the spiritual and the supramental transformation.

CHAPTER XVI

SPIRITUAL TRANSFORMATION

The upward movement and the silence are indispensable for the Truth to manifest.

The object of Yoga is to establish the inner consciousness and the higher being in you and by their strength change the outer existence. Sri Aurobindo

Man can rise to a higher level of consciousness and get rid of his ignorance, limitation and selfishness in order to get rid also of his sufferings.

The Mother

The ordinary consciousness is ignorant and separated from its true Self and the Divine. A veil of ignorance—of ego, desire and unconsciousness—hides the true Self and the Divine from us. We have therefore to get into a higher consciousness which knows and live consciously in the Divine. The realisation of the psychic brings a psychic change of the consciousness and the nature. But psychicisation is not a radical transformation of the basic elements of nature. It does not enable one to exceed the inherent limitations of the natural instruments. It reflects feebly and indirectly the supreme powers of the higher consciousness which are above us and above the mental

region, and waiting for descent into our nature for its spiritual transformation.

It is, therefore, essential that the psychic opening inward should be completed by an opening upwards to a supreme spiritual status or a higher existence. The consciousness has to rise to the ranges above the ignorant mind and to receive the light and force peculiar to these planes. This is called spiritualisation of the being, which denotes the union of the manifested nature with the higher spiritual consciousness and its resulting transformation. Sri Aurobindo says, "The spiritual change is the established descent of the peace, light, knowledge, power, bliss from above, the awareness of the Self and the Divine and of a higher cosmic consciousness and the change of the whole consciousness to that,"

Ascension of the lower consciousness to the higher level is the very first movement for the spiritual change. The mind has to rise to the Higher Mind, the Illumined mind, Intuition and Overmind and to receive from them the transforming force and light peculiar to them. A psychic aspiration towards these supernormal levels is a first condition of the movement upwards. The liberation of the psychic is also necessary so that it may support the action from above in the mind, the vital and in the physical being.

^{1.} On Yoga II, Tome Two, p. 204

When the psychic is fully opened, the lid that covers the mind opens or breaks asunder. The mind rises into a higher plane of pure self, silent, tranquil, illimitable; or it rises into regions of light or of felicity, or into planes where it feels an infinite Power or a divine Presence or experiences the contact of a divine Love or Beauty or the atmosphere of a wider and greater and luminous Knowledge."

Ascents may take place in a deep inner condition or trance or in a concentration of the waking consciousness. Both kinds of concentration may bring illumination, ecstasy and liberation. The repeated and constant ascent to the higher planes enables the mind, the vital and physical being to get soaked with their peace, silence, power, light and joy. But for complete transformation it is necessary that the ascent from the lower into the higher consciousness. should become permanent. The upward movement has to be developed till the whole source of consciousness is overhead and all movements are directed from the chigher regions. The conscious centre of our being, our thought, our will and action must rise out of the body and mind and take a free station above them. There one can open to and receive the Higher Consciousness-the Mother's-which afterwards descends to transform the lower imperfect nature

^{1.} The Life Divine, Vol. II (2), p. 943

and consciousness into a higher consciousness and nature.

One important result of the ascent is the realisation of the cosmic consciousness, the sense of the universal oneness. One realises the Cosmic Self, free, infinite, silent, inactive, one in all and beyond all. Or otherwise it may be the sense of the universe in oneself. the self being a cosmic person identified with all beings and all things in the universe. Again this may be the awareness of dynamic identity with the Cosmic Nature, which is in a sense the full perfection of this spiritual unity. The unity with Nature means that one's mind feels one with the cosmic Mind, one's life with the cosmic, Life, one's body with the universal Matter; for not only Spirit is one, but Mind, Life, Matter are one. This inmost spiritual unity has to be achieved through the conciousness or soul, purusha, in each plane of existence. The soul of the mind will unite with the soul of universal Mind, the soul of life with the soul of universal life, the soul of the body with the soul of universal Matter. Such cosmic identity may also be obtained by dwelling in the lower planes, breaking their limitations laterally, as it were, and calling down into them the light and power of the higher consciousness.

The yogin by virtue of his dynamic oneness with the universe is able to feel his body as one with all bodies and his life as one with the infinite life; he unites himself in heart and mind with all others. He will feel as intimately as his own the desires, struggles, joys, sorrows, thoughts, and impulses of others. A new power of direct communication, control over others and mutual action will develop out of the interfusion of one being with another. The unity with the cosmic Nature also brings much valuable occult knowledge and power beyond the ordinary range of. humanity. One becomes aware of cosmic planes, their worlds and beings, and the action of their forces and formations on oneself, on others and on outer occurrences. The inner being knows inwardly and directly the forces at play in the world, feels their movements and can accept or reject their action and results in our mind, life and body. Or it can modify, change, reshape the forces, their formations, and develop new immense powers and movements in place of the old normal functionings of the nature.

But notwithstanding all the perfections hitherto obtained by the yogin, the Purusha above the nature feels that there is always a defect, shortcoming, confused action in the natural being owing to the mechanical interplay of the gunas of Nature. So he has to ascend to the spiritual levels and become one with the higher soul of the cosmos, the universal spirit. Here he arrives at the larger and higher order or world of a greater principle in himself and the universe. He has a consciousness extending freely

everywhere and all his conscious activities are henceforth universal, one with those of the universe.
Breaking out of the ego, he enters into an illimitable
existence where the sense of separateness is entirely
dissolved. The liberated one rises to a height above
the ordinary mind, observes, discerns and controls
from there all that is below in the mind, vital and
body. He becomes self-knower and self-ruler, samrat,
and also a knower and master of his environing world
of being, samrat, through his spiritual oneness and
uplifted consciousness.

But even a permanent ascension is not enough for a radical change of the lower nature. A movement of descent from above is also necessary for the purpose; for then the effects of the ascent will become permanent. There must be a descent of the higher into the lower nature, an increasing inflow from above of the powers and elements of the higher consciousness. The descent at first takes place at wide intervals. But the experiences become more frequent till they become normal and familiar. The repeated and constant descent of the Divine Consciousness and its Force brings about the spiritual transformation of the whole being and the whole nature.

Sri Aurobindo says, "Once; this descent becomes habitual, the Divine Force, the Power of the Mother, begins to work, no longer from above only or from behind the veil, but consciously in the Adhara itself,

and deals with its difficulties and possibilities and carries on the Yoga." The Divine Power is "at once liberative, dynamic, creative and effective." The Force liberates the inner consciousness, carries on a work of intensive transformation and perfects the outer instruments. It new-creates the human being into a divine consciousness and elevates it into a higher spiritual existence. We become spiritual beings who lead their lives in the light of a higher truth, love, delight and harmony.

The descent of the Divine Force is indeed a capital movement in the Yoga. The Divine Shakti, the supreme Mother, does in a brief period the work of many lives and ages. She removes all obstacles, shatters every wall, widens and liberates the consciousness, enlarges and new-moulds increasingly the soul and its instruments. The inner parts—the inner mind, vital and physical being and the inmost psychic—are liberated from the limitations of the ordinary mind, vital and physical consciousness. The being spreads out, achieves the cosmic consciousness and becomes as wide as the universe; also our nature may become identified with the cosmic Nature.

The omnipotent Mother-Force "works at the same time for perfection as well as liberation; it takes up the whole nature part by part and deals with it, rejec-

^{1.} Letters, Vol. I, p. 193

¹⁶

ting what has to be rejected, sublimating what has to be sublimated, creating what has to be created. It integrates, harmonises, establishes a new rhythm in the nature." The almighty Shakti destroys all imperfections, opens to a greater perfection, confers always newer and greater powers upon the members of the outer nature. She can bring down too a higher and yet higher force and range of the higher nature up to the level of the Supermind. For the full transformation and perfection can come only by an ascent into the Supermind and its descent upon the life with its truth, power, light, harmony and beatitude.

The descent of the Higher or Divine Consciousness itself brings many major spiritual experiences. "The descent is an invasion of the finite by the Infinite, of the Ignorance by Knowledge, and of darkness and death by Light and Immortality." A new intuitive knowledge descends frequently or constantly and dispels all darkness of understanding. A new consciousness belonging to the higher planes comes down carrying with it new forces of thought or sight and a greater power of direct spiritual realisation. The heart and the sense become subtle and intense and begin to perceive the Eternal and Infinite in all existence. The Yogin sees

^{1.} Lights on Yoga, p. 71

^{2,} The Integral Yoga of Sri Aurobindo by Rishabchand

God in all sights, hears Him in all sounds and feels Him in all touches. He senses the Divine Being in all forms and personalities and manifestations. His consciousness embraces all in a deeper and closer unity of self and the world. The limitations of the nature are broken down and the sense of his infinity becomes a normal experience. He no longer stands separate from the Divine but becomes united with him in an abiding sense of universal peace, joy and harmony. The final upshot of all these or other experiences and changes is spiritualisation which means a turning of the consciousness of a mental creature into that of a spiritual being.

The work of transformation is however a complex and difficult task. Each minute part and each movement of the nature has to be either destroyed or replaced, if it is unfit to be moulded into the truth of a higher being. The process is often too long, difficult and even painful. With the psychic awake and in front, the action becomes more smooth, easy and rapid; otherwise the descent may bring untoward consequences. Again if the higher powers are prematurely pulled down, they will withdraw, because the adhara cannot keep or respond to them. All imperfection or impurity of the adhara impedes the work of transformation. The powers come at intervals and then hold back in order that the nature may assimilate them and become ready for further change. Lastly,

the higher light descending into the obscurity and imperfection of the lower nature undergoes a modification, a diminution of its power that cannot bring fulness or perfection in the results. Only the supramental can descend without losing its power; for it is the omnipotent Power of the Divine. The descent of the supermind completes the process of spiritual transformation by which the human being passes from a life of Ignorance to a life of Knowledge.

CHAPTER XVII

ASCENT TOWARDS THE SUPERMIND

The ascent to the divine Life is the human journey, the Work of works, the acceptable Sacrifice.

The transition from the mind-self to the knowledge-self is the great and decisive transition in the Yoga.

The aim of the Yoga is to rise to the highest possible supramental level and to bring down its consciousness and power into mind, life and body.

Sri Aurobindo

Our consciousness is wonderfully freed, uplifted and illumined through the spiritual transformation of our being. We become united with the Cosmic Divine; a universal Peace, Light, Power, Bliss is ours; but this cannot entirely transform and conquer the ignorant nature. We ourselves are free, but the nature remains in bondage and full of many disabling imperfections. The cosmic consciousness can liberate but has not the dynamic power that can effectuate a highest Knowledge in the outer actions of life. The outer being cannot express adequately the inner being's higher knowledge and power and bliss in the external activities. Only a farther ascent beyond mind into

the Supermind and the descent or bringing down of its divine powers can confer this supreme perfection. Here we attain a true identity with God and fully possess the spirit and its power in our outer person and nature for a perfect living in the Divine. So we must ascend into the gnostic plane and bring down its greatness and glory into the material life for its divine fulfilment.

The Supermind is the infinite wisdom and will of the supreme Sachchidananda. It is a dynamic principle by which the Almighty created the worlds, lives in them and governs them. It is the divine gnosis which is a perfect Truth-Consciousness possessing the essential and integral knowledge of both the Self and the World. Here Self and Matter, the Finite and Infinite, the One and the Many, do not appear as opposites but as different aspects of the same Reality. No conflict arises between the truth of the Divine and that of his manifestation, which is realised as an expression of the One and the Infinite who becomes the Many. This results from the fact that the Supermind has a complete indivisible knowledge unimpaired by the principle of division and inferior light of the lower (mental) planes. Sri Aurobindo says, "Mind cannot be our last conscious expression, because mind is fundamentally an ignorance seeking for knowledge; it is only the supramental Truth-Consciousness that can bring us the true and whole Self-Knowledge and world-Knowledge; it is

through that only that we can get to our true being and the fulfilment of our spiritual evolution."1

Again the Supermind has the power to transform and divinise fully the lower principles and to effect their perfect integration with one another. Our parts of will and action, our parts of knowledge, our thinking being, our being of life, all attain to their perfect harmony and fusion with one another in the gnostic plane. By opening to its action, the soul realises its divine bliss, the mind regains its divine light, life recovers its divine power, the body repossesses its divine essence and diberty. The psychic becomes the vehicle of true and pure love; mind ceases to reflect and becomes luminous with a supreme gnostic light; life becomes a thing vast, calm, intense, powerful and sheds its old narrow self of petty impulse and desire; the body casts off its animality and tamasic nature and becomes a conscious and willing servant of the Spirit. An ascent into the Supermind raises the consciousness into the divine gnosis; the ensuing descent of its Light* and Truth brings about a divine integration and perfection of the dynamic nature. Such ascent and descent must therefore be an ultimate aim of this Yoga.

^{1.} On Yoga II, Tome One, p. 49

^{*} Note—"Light is what always accompanies the Supramental Consciousness and its most essential power,"—More Lights on Yoga, p. 8

The emergence of the psychic or the inner being is one essential condition of the ascent to the Supermind. The psychic development and psychic change of nature is of the utmost importance, because it makes safe and easy the descent of the higher consciousness and the spiritual transformation without which the supramental realisation is not possible. The consciousness must shift its position from the outer to the inner self and all actions should proceed from the inner self and its will and action. The mental being must become the psychic or inner mental Purusha with full control over the nature. This true person should be capable of a more and more conscious participation in the action of the Universal Nature. "The individual Purusha should become the master of his own executive energy and at the same time a conscious partner, agent, instrument of the Cosmic Spirit in the working of the universal Energy."1

As the evolution towards the Supernature proceeds, the initial power of participation in the universal working would be followed by a feeling of the workings of the Higher Nature or the Divine Shakti in the individual. As a result of the workings, the being would emerge into and put on a divine nature; at the same time, the higher nature would emerge in and descend into the being. The individual soul or psychic

^{1.} The Life Divine, Vol II (2), p. 962

would then be its conscious, open and free field of work and instrument, a participant in its action, for transformation of the nature, while as Person or Purusha the yogin is one with his universal and the supreme Self. An opening towards this participation of a higher and more intimate kind is an indispensable condition of our transition to a state of supernature.

But the one important condition of participation in the workings of the Divine Shakti is difficult of fulfilment. For not only the Purusha but the Prakriti also must give its consent and participate in the higher workings. For this the mind, the vital and the physical must give up their old ignorant habits, formations, reactions, tendencies and movements. The triple nature must open to the influence of the higher light and surrender and agree to be governed by the rule of the Supernature. But all the parts are imperfect and react obstinately and revolt against "the much needed assent. The mind is attached to its own ideas, opinions, formations and the vital to its self-pride, arrogance and desire. The greatest opposition comes from the subconscient, which is still subject to mechanical movements rooted deep in the inconscient. These two parts continually send up old reactions to the mind and life in defiance of all attempt at control. "And yet the law of participation and the law of surrender are imperative; at each step of the transition

the assent of the Purusha is needed and there must be too the consent of each part of the nature to the action of higher power for its change."1

Another condition is an opening of the individual into the cosmic consciousness. The consciousness of the mental being is confined to the individual mind, life and body. This is the foundation of his thinking. feeling and willing. But the gnostic Purusha has normally the consciousness of itself as infinite; all movements of its being form and happen in the infinite as the sole reality of existence. The deliverance from the limiting and separating ego is therefore imperative for ascent to the Supermind. As long as we live in the ego, we cannot rise to the vast self-consciousness of the gnostic being. The Mother says, "If you are a candidate for super-humanity, you must be resolved to get rid of your ego, to transcend it, because so long as you keep it with you, the supramental will be for you something unknown and inaccessible."2 Purna Yogi has therefore to realise the cosmic consciousness and the unity of his nature with the universal nature. He must transcend the limiting ego-sense by identifying himself with all beings and things, by becoming one self with all.

^{1.} The Life Divine, Vol. II (2), p. 969

^{2.} Bulletin, Pondicherry, February '60

Lastly, a spiritual change of the entire being is necessary for rising into the supramental plane. The Yogin must have come into touch with the higher mental planes and imbibed their light and power and influence. He must have already become a spiritual being by the descent of a divine Light, Force, Purity, Knowledge, freedom and wideness. The supramental is the summit or the source of the higher consciousness. None can reach the summit or source at once; first of all the lower consciousness must be purified and made ready for the ascent. Hence the full psychic development has to be attained before a perfect spiritual descent can take place or the supramental transformation become possible. Without a psychic and a spiritual change nobody can attain the supramental change, which is our highest perfection. "One can enter into Supermind only at the very end of the sadhana, when all difficulties have disappeared and there is no obstacle any longer in the way of the realisation."1

The ascent from the spiritualised mind to the supermind takes place through a rising series of ranges, planes or layers of consciousness. But the ascent can be resolved into four main degrees, each with its own intrinsic light and power. Sri Aurobindo names them Higher Mind, Illumined Mind, Intuition and Overmind.

^{1.} More Lights on Yoga, p. 7

Here the mental substance* and the mental movement are more illumined, powerful and wide than in the ordinary mind. Each ascent or climb to a higher level brings a new consciousness into the being and this consciousness imparts a new rhythm to its movements. The higher level descending enters into the mind, life and body; it converts their incapable substances into its own higher spiritual essence, its greater energy of being and superior delight of existence. The new consciousness touches, penetrates and remoulds not only thought and knowledge but all the states and activities of our consciousness. The upshot is sublimation, transformation and integration of the entire being and nature through a series of ascents and descents.

The first ascent is in a Higher Mind which is "a luminous thought mind." This principle heightens and widens the works of the ordinary mind and intelligence that proceed by thought and reasoning. Here knowledge is born directly without any process of logical inference. The truth of the being and things is known by a light of direct knowledge without any intellectual process of thought. Thus the Divine Being and its myriad activities are revealed by an inner

^{*} Note—"Everything is a substance—even peace, consciousness, Ananda,—only these are different orders of substance."—On Yoga II, Tome Two, p. 803

perception that does not need any mental process of thought. Its characteristic power is a mass ideation; it sees and experiences a great totality of truth—the relation of idea to idea, of light to light—at a single view. On the side of the will this greater mind works on the rest of the being—mind, life and body—through the 'Idea-force,' the power of the thought for spiritual change.

The next step is the Illumined Mind, "a mind no longer of higher thought but of spiritual light." The Illumined Mind is a principle of luminous seeing unlike the higher mind which is a principle of luminous thinking. Here the truth of things is perceived by a spiritual vision, not merely by any process of thought. All secret truths are disclosed through a crowd of subtle images, while thought recedes to the background. This direct sight is a greater power for knowledge, "a larger comprehension and power of totality" than the perceptual power of thought. It illumines the thought-mind with a direct inner vision and inspiration and brings a spritual sight into the heart. Our vital and physical being also can contact and perceive and feel the Divine in all things as intimately as the mind and emotion by an intimate inner experience. transforming light it breaks the limitation and the inertia of the physical mind and fills the very cells of the body with its luminous consciousness.

The third in the series comes the Intuition. Here

intuition does not mean, as the word usually implies, a swift movement of thought for the perception of a truth not apparent to the ordinary mind. It is a direct light of the spirit that sees, hears or discerns the truth by a swift revelatory insight, inspiration or vision. It is something akin to the original knowledge by identity possessed by the supermind. It is the result of a penetrating or revealing touch with the object of knowledge. Intuition comes when the consciousness has a contactual union with the supreme Reality or the reality of things and beings. It is a direct and intimate perception of the truth in the consciousness, "a truth-perception in the depth of the being."

The Intuition upon descending imparts to the mind its own power of immediate seizing of the truth. The intuitive mind knows directly and therefore needs no reasoning to come to a conclusion. All other elements—heart, sense, physical consciousness—are also imbued with the power of immediate seeing, receiving or seizing the truths of divine realities. The whole being is modified and transformed into the intuitive substance and nature. But the intuitive mind, though a light from the supermind, is yet mind and not gnosis, 'the radiant sun of truth'. Even here the direct knowledge is not complete; it cannot bring that close identity of the subject with the object which is the special power of the supermind. Moreover it cannot give that complete and constant union with the Divine

in the active life, which is a supreme aim of the Integral Yoga.

The next step brings us into the Overmind, the last in the gradation. This principle is a more original and dynamic Power than the previous planes of Mind in the ascending series. The Overmind is "a power consciousness, a principle of global of cosmic knowledge." The seeker here opens to the cosmic consciousness and becomes aware of the cosmic spirit and the play of cosmic forces. When the overmind descends, the ego-sense is abolished; it is replaced by a cosmic perception and feeling of a houndless universal self and movement. Thoughts feelings, actions, sensations do not seem to originate in the body or the person; but they are felt as waves from the vast cosmic existence. The yogin loses all personal limits, all egoistic motive of action and gets rid of separative thoughts and feelings that create conflict. He perceives an infinite Oneness and a divine Harmony pervading the world amidst apparent division and discord. He has overpowering feeling of a peace, a silence, a joy, a bliss beyond expression, a sense of immortality, of eternity, of infinity.

The sadhaka on rising into the Overmind realises his identity with the Cosmic Self and his consciousness embraces all beings and things in the universe. But in this realisation one out of two possible experiences may supervene. The sense of individuality may entirely disappear in this infinite wideness. There is no longer a definite person, but only consciousness, only existence, only peace and bliss and actionless silence. Or there may be the sense of an individual, a self who is not the ego but a cosmic being, 'a universal individual.' For the true Person is not a small, narrow and limited self, but is one with all, vast and infinite and capable of containing the world within himself. He is the knower, devotee, servant, instrument, but not the old limited ego with any sense of separate existence. The Mother relates her experience of this wide self in these graphic words: "I no longer know whether the universe is I or I am the universe, whether Thou art in me or I am in Thee; Thou alone art and all is Thou and the streams of Thy infinite grace fill and overflow the world."1

The Overmind knowledge is however an inner experience that can bring liberation; it cannot achieve transformation of the nature. But to enter the supermind, inner knowledge alone is not sufficient; for this principle is not only a Knowledge but also a Will, a power for dynamic change and perfection. So the truths of Intuition and Overmind must be thrown upon and made effective in the active life; they should take hold of all our practical relations with the

^{1.} Prayers and Meditations of the Mother, p. 15

outward world. The higher consciousness and power belonging to these higher planes must find expression in the external life and its activities. The Overmind change is the final movement of the dynamic spiritual transformation. It takes up and heightens the workings of the previous grades; it adds to them a wideness of cosciousness and force, a greater harmony of knowledge, a more manifold delight of being.

The overmind can unite the individual self with the cosmic self and give to the nature a universality of action. Yet the Overmind does not enable the soul to depart out of the cosmos into the transcendent planes of existence. For the Overmind is a power, though the highest power belonging to the lower hemisphere. It has not the supreme unity and harmony of knowledge of the supermind. It cannot rise altogether above the ignorance which results from the separation of Mind, Life and Matter from the supreme origin. Again the Overmind descent cannot wholly transform the Inconscience. original darkness would remain there, which may invade and expel the newly evolved light and truth from its kingdom. A last transition from the overmind to the supermind is therefore indispensable for a

total transformation.

CHAPTER XVIII

SUPRAMENTAL FULFILMENT

A divine life in a divine body is the formula of the ideal that we envisage.

It is only in the supermind that the full Truth-Consciousness comes into being.

Only those who live in a supreme Truth-Consciousness and embody it are inwardly made or else remade in the Divine image.

Sri Aurobindo

It is the direct descent of the Supramental Consciousness and Power that alone can utterly re-create life in terms of the Spirit.

The Mother

The Supermind or Vijnana is the divine gnosis, the all-seeing and all-powerful wisdom and will of the Divine; it is the infinite and eternal "Knowledge-Will of the divine Consciousness-Force." It is the Power and Light of the Divine Will and the Divine Consciousness. The supermind is all-knowledge; it has the complete, perfect and infallible truth about the Self and the World, about all actions, all things and all persons. To the Vijnana, all its truth is direct perception, pratyaksha; it knows all things as simply, certainly and directly as a man knows his own existence.

For its knowledge is obtained by a spiritual identity, by becoming one with the Truth, with the object of knowledge. The object is seen not as outside the self but contained in the direct self-consciousness. The whole truth is seen in the self and by the self so that it is self-evident, infallible and absolute. The knowledge carries in it a spiritual sight that can visualise the invisible truth of all things, "their forces, powers, the eternities behind them." Thus the gnosis discloses all truths of reality and phenomenon by a direct contact or immediate vision. The Supermind has therefore a positive and direct and living experience of the supreme Infinite, the Brahman, which is the culmination of all divine knowledge and the source of all divine delight and all divine living.

The Supermind has not only the full consciousness of the truth but also a Will and a Force that can make its consciousness effective. The supramental will is "a conscious force of the eternal knowledge" that acts and creates as well-as knows. It creates and executes all things with a vision and power that are faultlessly effective. The mental will is often in conflict with the ideal of right or the intellectual knowledge. The mind has the awareness of what is good and right, but it is often too impotent to make it effective in active life. There is a constant incapacity to work out in living form and action the ideal that inspires our mind or the truth that we feel in our consciousness. Again

the individual will is not in harmony with and often deviates from and strives against the universal will. But in the gnosis, knowledge is one with the will; it is also in complete harmony with the universal will. So Sri Aurobindo says: "The Supramental is simply the direct self-existent Truth-Consciousness and the direct self-effective Truth-Power."

The supramental change is necessary to complete the process of spiritual transformation. The other planes have inferior light and power, which can make no radical change in the human consciousness. Their dynamic capacity decreases when they descend to work in the obscurity of the lower nature. The Supermind alone can act with full power in the obscure physical plane; its will can deal effectively with the unvielding subconscient part of the human nature. No other power can penetrate and transform the inconscience. which is the base of our existence. The Supermind alone can dispel the ingrained ignorance of all these nether regions. Upon descending into the adhar it would take direct control of the evolving nature. The result will be a rapid working of the process of transformation which would divinise the human nature. A transition thus takes place from the nature of Ignorance into the luminous Supernature of the Divine.

^{1.} Letters, Vol. II, p. 78

The gnostic change brings about an entire reversal of the human consciousness. The mind being a principle of division has not the true sense of unity. But the Supermind is a supreme principle of unity and harmony; it is intimately one with all and regards everything in the light of that oneness. Therefore the gnostic being would live in an intimate sense of unity in his own inner and outer life or the life of the community. All his ideas, feelings, sense will be based upon oneness and his actions will proceed from that basis. gnostic being in his cosmic consciousness is united with all beings and things in the world. He sees and feels all as himself and constantly lives and acts in that sense. His individual will is in harmony with the total will and his individual action with the fotal action. He would take the whole world into himself and feel all its forces and movements as part of himself. As a result a better life order will be created based upon universal love and sympathy as the right law of existence.

The gnostic individual would be the consummation of the spiritual man. The three truths of the Spirit—the individual, the universal and the transcendent—would be realised in his inner life. His whole being would become intimately one with the three aspects of of the integral Reality. He would become a Purusha or Conscious Being within finding its self-expression in Nature. The whole life—its thoughts, feelings, actions

—would be founded upon that consciousness as the true truth of the being. The Purna Yogi would also be united with the universal Self and Spirit as the second term of the Eternal. The expansion into universality breaks down the barrier of the separative ego, which is a first condition of the supramental change. The Yogin would live and act in an entire identity with the cosmic self and a spontaneous sympathy with all in the universe.

But even universality means a confinement within the domain of cosmic ignorance. So the Yogin has to realise the transcendent one within himself, the timeless aspect of his own self. The realisation must become so concrete as to be the origin of all dynamic activities of nature. "The gnostic individual would be in the world but would also exceed it in his consciousness and live in his self of transcendence above it; he would be universal but free in the universe, individual but not limited by a separative individuality." He would be above all personal joys, griefs and desires belonging to the lower nature; yet he would share in the joys and griefs of others. But nothing in the world can disturb his close communion and supreme identity with the supracosmic Reality. The result of such dynamic unity with the Supreme, the Highest, will be a radical change of his being from the basis of Ignorance to the basis

^{1.} The Divine Life, Vol, II (2), p. 1036

of Knowledge. This realisation called transcendentalisation is the acme of spiritual self-perfection.

Another supreme result of the gnostic change will be the deliverance of the nature from the incessant flux of the three modes or gunas of Nature known as sattwa, rajas, and tamas. These gunas by their inequality, constant motion and strife, bind us down to the inferior nature. The sadhaka seeks for a deliverance by the separation of the soul from the nature. The soul draws back from Nature and observes the action of the gunas, but it neither accepts nor interferes with their course and remains untouched by the actions of the Prakriti. Here. the soul regains its native spiritual freedom, but the nature remains in bondage to the troubled workings of the gunas of the lower Prakriti. For the liberation of of the nature itself the inferior unequal lower modes must pass into the greater equal triune mode of the divine Nature. The lower nature has not only to be transcended but uplifted or transformed into a higher divine supernature. The descent of the supermind alone can deliver the nature by elevating and remoulding it into a higher spiritual status, the eternal calm, light, force and bliss of the Divine Nature.

Here the static freedom of the soul is crowned by a dynamic transformation of the nature. The body responds to every demand of the spirit's Force, the vital parts admit a tireless action and the mind opens

to an essential light and peace and self-existent bliss. Tamas or inertia is replaced by shama, a peace and repose out of which springs all play of action and knowledge. There will be no rajasic desire for possession, no drive of vital impulse for action. Rajas will be replaced by tapas, a limitless power of action based on unshakable calm, peace and bliss. There will be no sattwa, the inferior light of mind casting about to seize and imprison the truth by its limited knowledge.. Sattwa will be replaced by voti, "a direct and authentic knowledge that springs straight from the depths of All-Knowledge". The result be that we shall dwell always in the living presence of the Supreme Mother and become a part and parcel and eternal portion of her Light, Force and Bliss in an uplifted abiding experience.

The Supermind will convert our being not only into a higher divine consciousness but into a larger divine existence. The elements of the nature will undergo an unprecedented transformation and attain their utmost perfection. The mind instead of being an ignorance seeking for knowledge will become a luminous channel of the divine Knowledge. The gnostic mind will know the inner as well as the outer phenomenon of an object by an intuitive vision and an intimate identity. The sense mind will directly feel and receive or perceive the thoughts, feelings, sensations of the object on which it is turned. The physical as well

as the subtle senses are illumined so that they get a true sense of things and become free from errors.

The Vijnana also takes up our feeling and emotion and delivers them from their errors and perversions. All emotions are turned into forms of love and delight and all feelings become feelings of love and devotion. The life-being is delivered from all desire and craving and becomes an instrument of unlimited force and enjoyment. The human will becomes united with the divine Will so that all our acts are for the sake of the Divine and the manifestation of his glories in the earth. All our actions, even the most limited one, will be a movement of the truth of the Divine Being and partake of its inherent perfection.

The body too will be transformed by the supramental force and released for ever from its obscurity and dull inertia. All ignorance, inertia and incapacity will be driven out from the system by virtue of its possession of full consciousness. The will of the spirit will directly control and determine the movements of the body; they will no longer be determined by the force or urges of the ignorant nature. The body will be turned into a true and fit and perfectly responsive instrument of the Divine. There would come into the body a higher spiritual power, a greater life-force, a diviner strength and ease. Again the higher consciousness brings a greater control over the nature.

and greater equality of the spirit. This will enable the being to bear with perfect calmness grief and pain and suffering. On the higher levels of gnostic plane the divine Ananda will pour into the being and fill even the cells of the body with a divine rapture.

One of the greatest victories of the Supermind will be the transformation of our material part which is the most undivine. The supramental change of the body is the most difficult part and the ultimate stage of the Yoga. The human physical is always full of dark, low and obscure forces that bar the inner progress. But all obstruction to the true movement will disappear as the light and power of the Supermind grow in the system. When these come down fully into the physical, it will share the experiences and the developments of the mind and vital. The body will become thoroughly divinised; there will be the constant sense of the divine, the feeling of the concrete presence of God in the bodily consciousness. Peace, Light and Ananda will pour through the whole system and finally become stable and take possession of the whole nature. shall feel the Light, Power or Ananda flowing through the body, the limbs, nerves, blood, breath and, through the subtle body, affecting the most material cells and making them conscious and blissful and we shall sense directly the Divine Power and Presence."1

^{1.} On Yoga II, Tome, One, p, 355

Lastly, the very cells of the body which are the most inconscient part of the system, are transformed by the action of the Supermind. The old-idea was that this part could never be organised or divinised by the action of a higher consciousness and will from above, as the cells are in a state of constant flux and movement. But the Mother from her recent experience tells us that the cells can be made to keep quiet, to fall silent and respond to the direct action of the higher spiritual planes for the purpose of transformation. For the cells having come from the Divine are constantly conscious of the Divine Presence; eagerly aspires after it, allows the Force to act without intervening and yield to a persistent pressure for their conversion to a divine existence. This conversion really means transfer of the directing power from the ordinary conscious will to a higher conscious spiritual will. When the cells are transformed, they realise fully the Presence within themselves, obey directly the divine will and become blissful with the divine bliss.

The bodily transformation will be the final stage in the spiritual evolution. This means a complete change of the ordinary human consciousness into the divine and supramental. "The mental man that we are is changed into the gnostic soul, the truth-conscious godhead, the vijnanamaya purusha." The

^{1.} The Synthesis of Yoga, p. 542

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human being is turned into a being of gnosis, a superman or divine man. Man becomes a god incarnate with transformed mind, life and body free from obscurity, falsehood, suffering and error of his worldly existence. Again the light and power of Supermind will take form not only in the life of the individual but in the collective life of a newly evolved race. A new kind of beings, a new collective life will come into existence as the outcome of the gnostic evolution.

A race of supramental men will appear on earth with fuller light, love and power. Their life will be guided by an inner spiritual force of love and sympathy for others. The supramental consciousness will govern the inner and outer individual life as well as the common or collective life. The only motive of their action will be expression of the Divine and the victory of the Divine Will upon the earth. The quarrel between the individual and society or the disastrous struggle between one nation and another will cease to exist. For, owing to the sense of oneness the individual desire and action will be in accord with the universal intention and action. This is the Golden Age, Satya Yuga, or new world order-"a divine change in the total life of humanity"_that will follow inevitably in the wake of the supramental manifestation.

The Supermind has fortunately been brought down upon the earth by the supreme yogic powers and

sadhana of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother for the redemption of mankind. The Consciousness and Power of the supermind manifested as a universal Light-Force on 29th February, 1956 which is therefore called the Divine Day. Always it has a transforming power; it can and certainly will change not only the inner life but also the conditions of the outer world. Even Nature will express the secret God-head within her by putting forth greater divine beauty, glory and harmony in its physical appearance. It is now working directly upon the earth-consciousness for its transformation into the supramental consciousness. Those who will open to it will receive its 'transfiguring grace'. But the grace will radiate and divinise though not the whole, yet the best part of humanity. There will be a divine change of the undivine world, a new glorious spiritual life in place of the old ignorant human existence. The Kingdom of God will be founded on earth with the Divine enthroned as the absolute Ruler of human life.

Nature shall live to manifest secret God, The Spirit shall take up the human play, This earthly life become the life divine.

^{1.} Savitri, Book XI, Canto I

CHAPTER XIX

21

THE YOGA OF SELF-PERFECTION

A spiritual self-perfection can only mean a growing into oneness with the nature of diving being.

Only that which aims at possessing the fullness of God is Purna Yoga; the sadhaka of the Divine Perfection is the Purna Yogin.

Sri Aurobindo

True spirituality is not to renounce life, but to make life perfect with a Divine Perfection. The Mother

"A divine perfection of the human being is our aim." The Integral Yoga seeks after the perfection of the whole human being, inner and outer, so that man may grow into an image of the Divine. We must unite with the Divine in every part of our being in order that the whole being may truly manifest the divine Nature in the material world. Perfection really means a growth out of the lower undivine nature into the higher Nature of the Divine Being; it is a conversion of the human nature into a likeness of and an essential oneness with the divine nature. This is ordinarily called sadrishya or acquisition of the dynamic divine nature by the transformation of the imperfect lower nature of ignorance.

Man is at present a partly self-conscious soul subject to and limited by his mental, vital and physical nature. To gain mastery and freedom, he must enter into identity with his higher Self and inmost soul by whose power alone he becomes the master of his nature. But for greater perfection he must grow out of separate individuality to become one with the universal Nature and Spirit. Besides he must rise to the spiritual levels above the mind for a dynamic union with the supracosmic Divine. This integral union with the Divine is the indispensable first condition of perfection; for it is impossible to divinise the human nature or make it an instrument of the Divine, unless there is union with the being, consciousness and delight of the Supreme and its universal Self and with all things and beings. Here the Yoga of self-perfection coincides with the Yogas of knowledge, works and devotion which are the direct means of divine union.

But there must also be an expression of the Divine in the active life; so the liberated man united with the Divine must become an instrument for the manifestation of the divine perfection in the human race. A life-action from unity with the divine nature becomes necessary for integral perfection of the human being. The object here is to arrive by the shortest way at the greatest growth of our spiritual power in all our instruments of knowledge, will, action, life, Mind is fulfilled by a greater spiritual knowledge; life comes

to possess a greater divine power and will; body finds its last use in becoming a perfect instrument of the spirit. This is the active principle of spiritual perfection by which the parts of nature become fit for a divine living upon earth. "Therefore," says Sri Aurobindo, "the integral Yoga of knowledge, love and works has to be extended into a Yoga of spiritual and gnostic self-perfection."

The first requisite of an active perfection of the being is a purification of the instruments. The being itself, the divine Reality in man, stands in no need of perfection. Mind, life and body are the three powers of nature which we have to purify so that by their right pure action they may be helpful to our integral perfection. The chief deformity of our nature is desire, which is a craving, passion or preference of the prana or life-being for possession and enjoyment. Desire is the root of all sorrow, affliction, inequality and carries into its pursuit a labour, hunger, struggle, trouble, disquiet, ashanti. To get rid of desire is an indispensable step for the purification of the mental life and its perfection. Here we have to take the help of the budhi, the intelligence and it will power, which is the highest part of the human mind. The budhi must detach itself from the siege of desire, emotion and impulse; it must reject or rectify the impure actions

^{1.} The Synthesis of Yoga. p. 701

of the other parts by its dominant will power. For the will has the power to correct and control the rebellious parts; it is a very potent means of purification.

But purification by the mental control is difficult, uncertain and very often a painful process; also it cannot counteract the downward pull of the nature. For the buddhi itself being a tool of Nature is subject to her control and unable to alter radically her way of proceeding. The process is much facilitated by the emergence of two higher movements: (1) the awakening of the higher being or the soul and (2) surrender to the Mother, the Consciousness-Force of the Divine. The psychic brings an increasing control over the nature and spontaneous rejection of all that conflicts with its peace and purity. The desire-soul is transformed by the action of the psychic; it learns to renounce all other claims except the spiritual desire of the Divine and of the divine perfection in all our nature.

But surrender to the Mother's Force and Light is the only way to complete purification of all the different parts of the nature. For even psychic control is not enough for a change of the submental parts—the subconscient and the inconscient—which hold an immense sway over all other members. As the surrender progresses, the Light-Force enters into the whole nature and effects its purification by a conscious direct working. This direct action effects a

conversion of the entire being, which is an indispensable condition of our real perfection. Sri Aurobindo says, "Trust the Divine Power and she will free the godlike elements in you and shape all into an expression of the Divine Nature."

The purification of the natural being prepares the ground for liberation, which is a second requisite for our perfection. Purification, sudhi, is not complete until it brings about liberation, mukti. But liberation here does not mean Nirvana or moksha, an actionless peace or a merging in the Absolute, laya, or an absorbed and immersed bliss of the Divine. Liberation means a spiritual change of being-a soul status of absolute freedom and equality—which is necessary for inner perfection. The liberated man lives in the peace. purity, higher joy and power of the spiritual being. This is the initial liberation of the Purusha gained by rising above the ego and the turbid action of the gunas of nature into the freedom of the Spirit. But, though the soul gains peace, bliss and freedom, yet the nature remains full of impurities, which are allowed to remain in the hope that they will drop off with death.

According to Sri Aurobindo, liberation means a twofold liberation of the soul of man as well as of his nature. Indeed liberation is not complete if the nature labours in bondage to the lower working of the gunas,

^{1.} The Mother, p. 88

which may at any time lead to a downfall. The liberation of nature has hitherto been regarded as an impossible task; for nature is like a dog's tail, which however straightened always resumes its habitual crooked curl. But the Integral Yoga aims at the release of nature from its lower poise and working by a conversion of the gunas into their divine counterparts. We shall then not only become one with the Divine in our spiritual existence, but dwell in him and he in us so that the whole nature will be full of his presence and changed into the divine nature.

There are four chief causes of our bondage; these are desire, ego, the dualities and gunas of Nature. We shall speak of desire and the method of its elimination from the nature in the next chapter. So here we shall speak first of the ego which is the seed or beginning of desire. The ego-sense is a false sense of separative existence which is contrary to the secret truth of unity and harmony of existence. Owing to this ignorance the ego cannot be at one with God, for unity with God means unity with the universe and with all beings. Hence the ego-sense must be abolished for achieving an integral liberation into the divine spirit and the divine nature. At first the individual must identify himself with his spiritual self above the nature by casting off the ego; when one unites himself with the soul, the ego disappears. Next in order to get wholly beyond the ego, we have to dwell in the infinite consciousness of the Self or the Spirit where the egosense is dissolved.

But the above method of ascent to a higher spiritual level is not entirely effective; for the ego finds its support in the normal separative action of the instruments. The ego-sense prevails in all parts of the nature —body, life-being, heart, senses, intellect and the will. Hence the elimination of the ego becomes possible only when the elements have been purified of egoistic desire, wish, will and egoistic emotion. Along with their purification, there must be a forceful rejection of the ego by mental or psychic will. But the most effective process is complete surrender to the Divine Will and Power which removes all traces of the ego. We shall deal with the different methods of elimination of the ego more elaborately in a later chapter.

But liberation is not complete so long as the nature is not liberated from its inferior modes or gunas by their transformation into the higher modes of the supernature, Para Prakriti. In the beginning the soul is obliged, as it were, to submit to the control of the gunas of the nature, it has no control of them. It can only be free by rising above the gunas and rejecting their flawed imperfect actions; a transcendence is therefore essential for liberation. This transcendence is often sought by a withdrawal or an inner retirement from the action of the lower

nature. But this is only an initial and very often a quietistic liberation with a tendency to inaction. The end of this movement is departure into the silent self, moksha. But a complete dynamic liberation comes, when the gunas of nature are transformed by the direct action of the Supermind into their divine counterparts—sattwa, rajas and tamas into yoti or spiritual light, tapas or divine dynamis and shama or divine calm, which are the three powers of the Eternal. The liberation which this transformation brings is not a passive release gained by inaction but perfect and self-existent whether in action or inaction, in static repose or dynamic movement.

With the liberation of nature, there also comes a liberation from the distressing sense of the dualities of Nature. The origin of the dualities—of pleasure and pain, good and evil, liking and disliking—is an ignorance which is unable to seize upon the truth of things and meet them with a strife of attraction and repulsion. But the soul on rising into the gnosis discovers God in the world, finds the good in all things and enjoys in all actions the divine Ananda. There we are delivered from the misleading error of the contrary forms of the dualities and our repugnance to the cosmic action of the Divine. Our union with the Supreme becomes integral, an essential identity in being and a dynamic identity in nature, which is the perfected liberation.

When the purification and liberation of both the self and the nature have been effected, then the spiritual perfection, siddhi, becomes possible. According to Sri Aurobindo the essential siddhis are mainly four in number; (1) equality, samata, (2) power, shakti, (3) gnosis, vijnana, (4) enjoyment of being, bhukti. When these four Siddhis have been attained, all others will come automatically or become easy of achievement:

The very first necessity for spiritual perfection is a perfect equality. The divine nature is always equal, detached, unmoved whether in the silence of the self or in its cosmic action. Therefore a perfect equality is the means by which we can grow into the divine nature and possess the spirit's greatness, joy and peace. But there must be equality not only of the self but also in the nature which is a condition of the Yoga of Self-perfection. Not in the spirit alone but in all parts of the nature and in all their workings, we must be always full of divine calm and tranquility.

The two chief deformities that bring inequality in the nature are ego and desire. By renouncing the egoistic will of desire, the Prana accepts with an undisturbed equality all inner or outer experiences of life. This equality comes more fully when the vital being is quieted and mastered by the spirit and learns to submit to its higher will and guidance.

But a greater perfection comes when through equality and surrender the being receives into itself the impartial working of the Tapas, the spiritual force, and becomes the instrument of a greater calm divine action. Then the vital does not respond to the lower impulses but receives and obeys a greater impulsion from the spirit above the mind. A similar equality can and must be brought into all other elements by the same means of surrender and submission to the divine will and guidance and to the working of the Divine Force.

the highest equality is the equality of Sachchidananda; it brings into the whole of our being and nature the eternal tranquility of the Infinite. The equality of nature is only a preparation for this spiritual equality that reflects the supreme equality of the Universal Brahman. This greater equality comes from a constant and intimate perception of the one Self or the one Divine everywhere, in all beings, all things and all happenings. This perfection culminates in an indentification of oneself with the cosmic self or spirit by silencing, eliminating and casting away the ego. The being becomes infinite and universal and free from the ignorance and limitation of the lower nature. The individual becomes one with all beings and things, his action is an inseparable part of the action of all, and he enjoys an equal delight in all the cosmic manifestation of the Divine, bhumananda. This is the highest perfection of equality, a plenitude beyond our mental conception.

The second requisite of perfection is the heightened, enlarged and rectified power, shakti, of the instruments of our normal nature. All the active parts are to be raised to the highest working pitch of their power and capacity and undergo a spiritual and gnostic transformation. The object of this cultivation of power is to make the parts fit instruments for right, pure, perfect, spiritual and divine works. The powers of the mind, heart, life and body are not only to be purified of their defects but acquire a capacity for doing all works in full union with the divine consciousness and will. The first process of this perfection which aims at the development of our normal powers is carried on with the help of the buddhi, but it afterwards brings in the supramental energy to change and enlarge this action. There must be a clear and watchful observation of the instruments of nature by the purified intelligence. Also there must be an insistent will and a constant practice, abhyasa, of self-modification and selftransformation. This practice should constantly reject all defect and perversion and replace them by the right state and a right and enhanced working.

At first the body must be taught by the will to be entirely passive in the hands of the higher instruments, but eventually in the hands of the spirit and the Shakti. Moreover, there must be a capacity, strength, energy, force to work automatically and rightly according to the will of the intelligence or of the spirit. The vital must have the power to hold the superior divine energy and carry out all impulsion or command from the higher sources with strength, freedom and perfection. The heart or the emotional being must be delivered from all perverse emotion such as wrath, cruelty, violence, egoistic ambition, etc., by purification, by equality, by the light of knowledge. Besides we have to cultivate for perfection a psychical heart of calm, love, charity, sweetness, tolerance, forgiveness and forbearance.

The last perfection is that of the intelligence and thinking mind, buddhi. This part must be free from the claims of the vital and the emotional being which seek to falsify the truth by desire or distorted affections. It must also be free from its own defect, its narrowness, preference and prepossession and become a clear mirror of the truth, an instrument of integral knowledge. To gain such mental perfection we must draw back into the soul of the mind, manomaya purusha. This mental person which is at first felt as a witness, becomes afterwards capable of guiding, controlling and refining all mental movements by its higher will-power, greater knowledge and intuitive perception of the truth. When the normal instruments are thus perfected, they will serve the will of the Purusha in a complete and unified harmony

of our total being of nature. Therefore, this perfection must develop more and more, until the instruments become ready for their highest supramental action.

The perfecting of the normal mind, heart, prana and body is a preparatory perfection for the spiritual change of nature and its spiritual working. But for a greater perfection we have to call into our being and life the divine Shakti with the Ishwara in her or behind her. Then the personal effort will be replaced by the working of a spiritual Force, which will effect a more rapid and radical change of the being and nature. For without this divine presence and this greater working there can be no Siddhi of the power of nature. Here the one indispensable condition is a gradual surrender of one's whole being, which brings opening to the divine force, the supreme Shakti of the Supreme. There will then be no separate personal will or individual energy nor any sense of ourselves as the worker. The Shakti will lay hold upon all our energies and change all our activities into joyful expression of her own living and conscious power and presence. At length she will raise us to the being of gnosis, its supreme light, power and ananda that will change the imperfect human nature into the flawless divine nature.

The next step of perfection will be the evolution of the mental into the supramental being by rising

above the mind. The mind is an instrument of ignorance, it cannot be the direct and perfect instrument of the infinite spirit acting in its own knowledge. That instrument must be the divine supermind, which is a truth-consciousness acting according to the truth of the spirit. The gnostic soul reaches a true identity with the Divine and possesses the spirit and power of the truth-Nature. So the human being has to ascend into the supermind and bring down its forces into all the different parts of the nature. Then he will live in the light, power and bliss of the Infinite and become a channel of their divine expression in life.

The first method of rising into the supermind lies in the development of our intellect, our will and other natural powers in the manner we have described above. The second method, which is a more direct way of approach, consists in the raising of our being to the highest mental centre called sahasradala above and outside the head in the subtle body. This centre at its top and summit can receive the supreme power and light of the supermind, which will then descend into the human vessel to transform and perfect the working of the lower nature. The method proceeds doubly by the lower being rising into the higher levels and the higher consciousness coming down to effect an integral change of the whole system. The superior being upon entering into the system will reject and eliminate whatever is contrary to its greater

truth or native to the lower being and nature. On the other hand, it will purify and transform all the essential things that are derived from the supermind and spirit but falsified by the mental ignorance. The upshot will be that the entire being will undergo a gnostic change and all its activities become "a play of perfected knowledge-power, will-power, delightpower" of the being of Vijnana.

Knowledge is the first principle of gnosis; therefore the mental being is elevated by the gnosis into the light of an infinite divine knowledge. The whole action of the logical mind is superseded by a luminous truth vision that possesses the truth by a direct light and contact. The human reason is turned into a sort of higher divine reason that brings authentic knowledge by making the subject one with the object. But its action is not confined to the higher reason alone, it extends to all other parts' of our being. "The Vijnana takes up the will and puts it first into harmony and then into oneness with the truth of the supremental knowledge.... The gnosis takes up not only our intelligent will, but our wishes, desires, even what we call lower desires, the instincts, the impulses, the reachings out of sense and sensation and it transforms them.It takes up all our emotions and turns them into various forms of love and delight, even our hatreds, repulsions, causes of suffering. It finds out or reveals the meaning they missed and by missing it became the perversions they

are; it restores our whole nature to the eternal Good."1

The last member of our self-perfection is bhukti or divine ananda of existence. After the possession of the knowledge-self, we have to achieve a yet more perfect perfection. We have to take up our gnostic existence to the Bliss-Self, anandamaya Purusha; for Ananda is the essential and original nature of the Spirit. In Ananda our Spirit will find its true self, its essential consciousness and absolute power of existence. The embodied soul entering into the highest, absolute, unlimited bliss existence will find its freedom and infinite perfection. In the gnostic plane the soul is aware of its infinity and lives in it, yet it lives also in a working centre for the individual play of the Infinite. Here the soul realises its identity with all existences. vet it keeps a distinction without difference by which it can meet them in a certain diverseness. But in the bliss nature the centre disappears; all are one equal being. one identical spirit. "All other selves are entirely its own selves in action as well as in essence. The joy of contact in diverse oneness becomes altogether the iov of absolute identity in innumerable oneness."2

The supreme bliss-soul possesses the highest knowledge, as all forms and activities appear to it as forms

^{1.} The Synthesis of Yoga, pp. 563-4

^{2.} Ibid, p. 576

and activities of the bliss of the Infinite. Hence fear, desire and sorrow entirely fall away from us; for these are diseases of the mind born of its false sense of division and limitation. We lose completely the passion for release from worldly existence, its troubles, pains and sorrow, mumuksutva, and attain an absolute liberation of the nature. The evolved soul possessing the bliss nature can play with the manifestation without being harassed by fear of the Ignorance; he is not bound to birth or to non-birth. "He will be one in bliss-consciousness with all the world-play and its powers and happenings and there will be banished for ever the sorrow and fear, the hunger and pain of our lower and darkened mental and vital and physical existence."

^{1.} The Synthesis of Yoga, p. 580

CHAPTER XX

THE ULTIMATE VICTORY

The target at which we are aiming is immortality.

And of all the habits death is surely the most obstinate.

The Mother

Even there shall come as a high crown of all The end of death, the death of Ignorance.

Naturally, the release from subconscient ignorance and from disease, duration of life at will, a change in the functioning of the body must be among the ultimate elements of a supramental change.

Sri Aurobindo

Sri Aurobindo says: "If the transformation of the body is complete, that means no subjection to death—it does not mean that one will be bound to keep the same body for all time. One creates a new body for oneself when one wants to change." The Integral Yoga entertains the entirely new concept of divinisation of man down to the very cells of the body. This vision implies the immortality of the physical body, a plenitude which was not conceived by any

^{1.} On Yoga II, Tome One, p. 14

previous Yoga. The ancient yogas never recognised complete perfection of mind, life and body as the ideal of their realisation. The three nature parts were regarded as inherently imperfect and therefore mustibe dropped after a certain time. Disease, decay and death were regarded as the inevitable end of all created beings. But the imperfections must be removed in a scheme of total transformation.

The body to be fully divinised must share in the immortal substance of the Divine. The Upanishad declares that all is the Divine; if that is true, then the triple nature must also be essentially divine and capable of perfect divine change and divine manifestation. A divinised man must have not merely a divine mind and life, but also a divine body; otherwise the imperfections of the body will interfere with the perfect working of the mental and vital elements. The immortality of the body must therefore be taken as the final goal of the Integral Yoga, its ultimate victory. The divinised man must have a body which is no longer subject to disease, decay and death like the ever-lasting forms of the celestial beings.

The ideal of physical immortality seems incapable of achievement. For, the law of all existence is decay and dissolution; nothing will last for ever, not even the stupendous cosmos. Some biologists even go so far as to say that death is desirable for the welfare of the species, for only a change through death can give that

new fitness to the body by which it can survive in its struggle for existence. They say that prolongation of life after a certain period is unnecessary and even harmful to the well-being and development of the species. But the perfection of the human being as envisaged by Sri Aurobindo cannot be complete if the physical body be subjected to the compelling yoke of death. The body has its own aspiration for healthy perpetuation as much as for joy, beauty and strength. We cannot ignore the demand of the body for perfection, for perfection cannot be perfect unless our body can be divinised and made immune from its two signal defects of death and disease. As matter has come from God, the sat aspect of the Divine, we must admit that the body can share in the spirit's perfect and immortal existence.

Our primary object here is not continuity of a particular physical form for an endless egoistic activity, but the elimination of all elements that make of death an inevitable and forceful process. The sadhak of Integral Yoga aims at complete liberation from all possible attacks of illness and the power to prolong life at will, iccha mrityu. The aim is a perfect physical system which by pertaking of the immortal divine consciousness and substance would not be the victim of death by old age or disease or by any stroke of accident.

But how can the ideal of immortality be made a

practical reality? The key to its effective realisation lies in the Supermind, the omnipotent power of the Divine, of which the law is immortality. No mystic before Sri Aurobindo possessed a clear vision of the supermind, far less could anybody bring down its alleffective power into the physical for a radical cure of its basic defects, The only all-fulfilling power is the supramental which can confer on the physical being its ideal of immortality. The supramental Light-Force descending into the body can transform its grossness and inertia into an illumined energy capable of conquering death and disease.

But at first we must eliminate the various metaphysical factors that have made death an inevitable end. Here the primary cause is attachment to things and beings of the earth that are perishable. The Mother says, "If you wish to escape from death, you must not bind yourself to anything perishable." Attachment brings hunger for selfish possession, and this fortifies the selfish ego which is subject to the nature's law of dissolution. The passion for sexual enjoyment which is a most powerful vital desire should be entirely discarded if one wants to escape the clutch of death. The ultimate cause however is the psychological Ignorance of one's true being which must be

^{1.} Bulletin, Pondicherry, February '54

removed by a knowledge of the divine personality which is immortal,

The body disappears when it serves no useful purpose in existing, when it is no more good for anything. But the body may grow from perfection to perfection and that will bring no deterioration which is the cause of death. The Mother says, "It is precisely because the body decays, declines and ends by a complete degradation that death becomes necessary. But if the body followed the progressive movement of the inner being, if it has the same sense of progress and perfection as the psychic, there would be no necessity for it to die."1 She assures us that all imperfections of form may little by little be corrected, all the weaknesses replaced by strength, all incapacities by skill. By patient and persistent work we may prevent decay and deterioration and pave the way for immortality by constant growth and progress in the inner and outer parts of our existence.

The soul comes here for evolution from a human mental into a divine mental or spiritual existence. So the body must become a fit instrument for the expression of its divinity in the material world. Unless the body be able to keep pace with the soul's inner progress, a new body has to be assumed by the soul for fulfilment of its evolutionary purpose. This is the

^{1.} Bulletin, Pondicherry, August '68

basic reason for physical death, which has been pointed out by Sri Aurobindo in the following words: "The material or physical causes are not its sole or true cause; its true inmost reason is the spiritual necessity for the evolution of new being." Hence the Mother advises us to exceed our limited ego in every circumstance in order that the soul may realise its goal of divine expression in human nature.

The following pregnant words of Sri Aurobindo may also be quoted in this context; "As for immortality it cannot come if there is attachment to the body,—for it is only by living in the immortal part of oneself which is unidentified with the body and bringing down its consciousness into the cells that it can come. I speak of course of yogic means. The scientists now hold that it is (theoritically at least) possible to discover physical means by which death can be overcome, but that would mean only a prolongation of the present consciousness in the present body. Unless there is a change of consciourness and change of functioning it would be a very small gain." The realisation of psychic immortality is the basis upon which we can safely and profitably build the immortality of the physical body.

The mortal body can attain immortality only by a

^{1.} The Life Divine, foot-note, p. 732

^{2.} The Supramental Manifestation upon Earth, p. 62

descent of the Supermind into the physical being for its total transformation. Here we must remember that there is a great difference between the bodily consciousness and the material body. The physical transformation implies not merely a change in the bodily consciousness which can be done by the descent of a higher consciousness into the physical. The supramental change of the body implies a radical change of the physical form and not merely a prolongation of life in the present body. This donotes a total change in the bodily structure and bodily organs which must be made plastic and progressive enough to answer to the soul's demand for expression of its divinity.

At present the human body is built of gross matter and material organs which function like those of animals. We have to depend entirely upon the organs; if these do not work or work improperly, death supervenes quickly or slowly. Transformation implies that all this arrangement whichis purelymaterial should be replaced by "an arrangement for concentration of forces." The functions of the body such as the circulation of blood, the action of the heart and other organs will be conducted not by the material centres of activity but a power of the Spirit acting through the centres. Each organ will be replaced by "a centre of conscious energy and directed by a movement coming from above, from higher regions. No more stomach, no more heart, no more circulation, no more lungs, no

more "All that disappears. But it is replaced by a whole set of vibrations representing symbolically what those organs are." The transformed body will be governed by different types of vibrative forces, which are real centres of energy, and not by the physical organs of the animal body.

To effect the above change, one must first of all become conscious of each type of the cosmic energy of which each organ is a symbolic representative. "And then you must have at your disposal the original vibrations of that which is symbolised in these organs. You must slowly gather these energies in your body and change each organ into a centre of conscious energy that will replace the symbolic movement by the true movement."2 Another method would be the opening of the centres in the subtle body, suksma sarira, by the Tantric method or, as in the Purna Yoga, by the descent of a higher conscious force from above. The centres would then pour their energies into, and radiate them throught the whole material body_nerve, plexus, tissue and cell. The physical life and its necessary activities will then be maintained by those higher energies in the new transformed existence.

Sri Aurobindo says, "This (transformation) may

^{1.} Bulletin, Pondicherry, February '68

^{2.} Ibid.

go so fa- these organs might cease to be indispensable and even be felt as too obstructive; the central force might use them less and finally throw aside their use altogether. If that happens, they might waste by etrophy, be reduced to an insignificant minimum or even disappear. The central force might substitute for them subtle organs of a very different character or, if anything material was needed, instruments that would be forms of dynamism or plastic transmitters rather than what we know as organs. This might well be part of a supreme total transformation of the body. though this too might not be final." The Mother's declaration of August, 1954 confirms the above statement of the Master about the future divinised body: "The supramental body will be unsexed, the need of animal procreation no longer existing. The human form will retain only its symbolic beauty and one can foresee even from now the disappearance of some awkward protuberances, such as the genital organ of man and the mammary glands of women".2

Now, one may well imagine the action of the organs to be carried out directly by a power of the spirit instead of the material forces working through them. The life of the body which makes it move and change may also be replaced by a higher force of dynamism.

^{1.} The Supramental Manifestation upon Earth, p. 70

^{2.} Towards February 29, 1960, p. 7

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^{2.} Towards February 29, 1960, p. 7

The wear and tear will then disappear; for one will have at each moment the force that is needed for support, for any action that is necessary. The renewal of the active power, the energy, will become possible by drawing directly from Nature "the sustaining energies of her universal existence." But it is difficult to conceive how the bones, specially the skeleton, can be made plastic or dispensed with for the construction of a supple or flexible body. To remain erect, the body must have a bony frame; there can be no rigidity or solidity of the body without the skeleton.

The Mother however holds out to us the assurance of a divine body without bones. She says, "There is no end of imagination: to be Iuminous whenever one wants it, to be transparent when one wants it. Naturally, there is also no need of any bone in the system, it is not a skeleton with skin and viscera upon, it is another thing. It is concentrated energy obeying the will. This does not mean that there are no definite and recognisable forms; the form will be built up with qualities rather than with solid particles. It will be supple, mobile, light at will, as opposed to the fixity of the gross material form."

Sri Aurobindo also supports the above view when he speaks of a divine body built out of subtle matter. He says that the animal means of procreation may be

^{1.} Bulletin, Pondicherry, February '68

superseded by a purely occult method for creation of the supramental body. The new form will be built with subtle physical matter and then released into the gross physical world by "a resort to supraphysical processes acting by supraphysical means for a physical result." A soul wishing to assume a body in order to take part in a divine life upon earth may be provided with such a form by the method of direct mutation from subtle into gross matter by an occult force and process which is unknown to us.

Thus we see that not only the body-structure and the organ systems but also the very substance of the body, although remaining material, will be of a different character. Sri Aurobindo has said that the supramental consciousness possesses a supramental substance. The supermind descending into the body will new-create it with this divine substance into a flawless divine body. The new body will be a fit instrument for complete manifestation of the indwelling divine spirit.

The supramental body—the "glorified body" as the Mother calls it—will be free from heaviness or tamas or unconsciousness on account of its possession of complete consciousness. This body will have as much lightness or plasticity or elasticity as one wills; it will consequently exceed the laws of the physical body. For instance, the body will be free from gravitation and acquire some occult powers known to the ancients, e. g., the power to be extremely heavy, or extremely

light, very big or very liny, (garima, laghima, mahima, anima). The divine body will be luminous, its luminosity will be visible even to the ordinary man; it will be turned into a staff of light, each cell of which will radiate the supramental glory.

But the total transformation of the body as envisaged above seems to be a matter still very far ahead. Many intermediate stages will be required for the passage from mortal man to superman with an immortal body. The change is tremendous and many intermediate beings must come to work it out step by step. But even the formation of a new divine race having a partly divinised body seems well-nigh impossible at the present moment.

Fortunately for us a new consciousness other than the supramental descended into the earth's atmosphere on January 1, 1969. The Mother has identified this consciousness as being the intermediate level between the present mental consciousness and the supramental consciousness. "This descending consciousness is that of the superman which is still that of man but with a very large range and power though not transformed into the gnostic being. The consciousness of the superman has not only descended into the earth's consciousness but is established there and is fully operating."

^{1.} Mother India, January, 1969

Regarding the characteristics of the new consciousness, the Mother says, "It was something very material, I mean it was very external—very external—and it was luminous with a golden light. It was very strong, very powerful; but its character was a smiling benevolence, a peaceful delight and a kind of opening out into delight and light." Her impression is that it is a divinity, very strong and at the same time very gentle, that has come to help and guide people in their transformation from man into superman. It is benevolent through powerfulness, it is not something weak as generally in the human being; it is benevolence that compels, a kindliness with a great force.

The supermind consciousness has now become normal and is consciously active in its operation of physical transformation. It acts like a mentor, teaching the body what must be accepted and what should be rejected. "A consciousness is there—a very precious thing—giving lessons to the body, teaching it what it must do, that is to say, the attitude it must have, the reaction it must have, mit came to tell the body: 'Take this attitude, do this, do that in that way,' and then the body is satisfied, it is completely reassured, it can no more mistake."

The new descent brings an enormous gain to

^{1.} Bullelin, Pondicherry, February '69

^{2.} Ibid.

mankind. There has hitherto been no indication regarding the process of bodily transformation, as nobody had done the thing before. Now there is no more need of study, of observation, of guidance about transformation of the physical. We have now a guide, a mighty power to direct us aright in every moment and every movement of life. If the body opens to receive and keeps the right attitude, it will get every help and support in the matter of its transformation. The new manifestation will help the creation of supermen, who in turn will make room for supramental beings with fully divirised mind and immortal body. Then Sri Aurobindo's dream of a heavenly earth peopled by demi-gods and demi-goddesses will be utterly fulfilled.

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CHAPTER XXI

ON QUESTIONS OF CONTROL

Food has to be taken in the right spirit, with the right consciousness; sleep has to be gradually transformed into the Yogic repose.

Sleep cannot be replaced, but it can be changed; for you can become conscious in sleep. Sri Aurobindo

Establish a greater peace and quietness in your body, that will give you the strength to resist attacks of illness.

The body should reject illness as energetically as in the mind we reject falsehood.

The Mother

A. DESIRE FOR FOOD

Life depends for its very existence upon food, But food is too often associated with gross physical instincts, impulses and desires. These things bring about the coarsening of the mind and its subjection to the senses. Man tries to subtilise them by recourse to temperance, abstinence or carelessness about the physical needs and absorption in higher things. But all this does not bring liberation and is not the way of the divine life. What is wanted is freedom from

vital desires and attachments, the greed of and desire for food, "It is not necessary to have desire or greed of food in order to eat. The Yogi eats not out of desire but to maintain the body." One must remain calm and equal, not being overjoyed when the food is tasty or sorry and discontented when it is insufficient or unpalatable. To be always thinking about food and troubling the mind is contrary to the spirit of Yoga. The food element should occupy a small corner in the mind, which must remain absorbed in higher things turned away from the cravings of the physical nature.

The body is the means of the sadhana; so it must not be neglected but maintained in proper order. One's primary duty is to give the body what it needs for its own efficient working. Following the injunctions of the Gita, Sri Aurobindo advises a middle course between free indulgence and rigid austerity with regard to food habits. The Gita says, Yoga is not for one who eats in excess nor for one who abstains from eating altogether. There is no harm in fasting from time to time for a day or two. But an entire abstinence from food in the present conditions is impracticable. Even a prolonged fasting or excessive austerity brings many untoward consequences. The vital energy and receptivity may increase for a time

^{1.} Bases of Yoga, p. 86

with fasting; but the material substance which supports the body is wasted away and must be replenished. People who fast easily get exalted and may lose their balance. The pouring of abnormal energy into the mind and vital naturally creates a disturbance or a disharmony among the different parts, which may endanger the process of the sadhana.

The principle of hunger cannot be overcome either by satisfying its craving or by forcibly denying its claims. "It is by putting a will on it to change and bringing down a higher consciousness in it that it can change." Food should be taken in the right quantity (neither too much nor too little) to meet the body's need of growth and recuperation. It should be taken without greed or repulsion as the means given by the Mother for the maintenance of the body. Besides food must be offered to the Divine; when we eat we must feel that it is the Divine who is eating through us. Then the gross material act of eating food will become a sublime deed of dedication. "When we eat, we should become conscious that we are giving our food to that Presence in us; it must be a sacred offering in a temple and the sense of mere physical need or selfgratification must pass away from us."2

Desire for food or for any other object is essentially

^{1.} Sri Aurobindo and the Mother on Food and Life, p. 45

^{2.} Ibid, p, 46

a craving of the vital for its self-pleasure. It indicates a weakness of nature, which must go if one wants to be master of oneself. Desires, like other ordinary vital movements, do not belong to the true self or the true nature. They come into ourselves from the outside as waves from the universal Prakriti; we are overtaken by them because of our habit of responding to their suggestions. They first enter into the subconscious vital and afterwards rise to the surface. Then the mind becomes aware of them and regards them as something belonging to the individual nature. When anybody feels the desire as part of himself or planted in him, then it becomes difficult to get rid of the invader. But when one lives in the true consciousness one feels the desire outside oneself or entering from outside into the mind and the vital parts. Then it becomes much easier to dismiss it than when one has to struggle with it as if it were a part and parcel of one's own being and nature.

The proper course for control of desire is to detach oneself and observe the movement as something going on outside the true being. This will enable one to reject the wrong movement from the consciousness and put the true movement and the true consciousness in its place. By this twofold process of detachment and rejection, the lower vital will be gradually purified and become free from desire. This 'inward essential rejection', it must be noted, is something quite different

from suppression; it is a spiritual purification that by a change of nature automatically replaces the wrong by the right movement. But one must also refrain from any improper action suggested by the vital, which must be regarded as part of the yogic discipline. To call down the Mother's Force for help is also a chief means of removal of desire as of all other obstacles to sadhana.

An equanimity of spirit is very helpful in getting control over the desire for food. Equality is here the test as in so many other things. The Mother says: "To conquer the greed for food an equanimity in the being must be developed such that you are perfectly indifferent towards food. If food is given you, you eat it; if not, it does not worry you in the least; above all you do not keep thinking about food."Get the idea of food out of the consciousness, do not attach the slightest importance to it." Sri Aurobindo says that one must 'learn to regard food as only a physical necessity and the vital satisfaction of the stomach and the palate as a thing of no importance.

Another most potent means of overcoming the greed for food is to come in contact with the psychic being, the true soul deep within us. The psychic brings an immediate release from all greed, all hankering and all feverish desire. For the true being knows how un-

^{1.} Words of the Mother, Third Series, pp. 1-2

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important are material things and that the sole thing that matters is the Divine. Really, the psychic has no desires; "it has only aspirations and a seeking and love for the Divine and all things that are or tend towards the Divine." Besides, the soul being a portion of the Divine carries with it a sense of strength that breaks down all oppositions coming from the lower nature. Hence Sri Aurobindo says, "The first condition for getting rid of desire is, therefore, to become conscious with the true consciousness."

B. SEX IMPULSE

The sadhak should not indulge the sex impulse, for it brings failure in sadhana. The vital excitement caused by it favours the inrush of the vital forces and beings that are opposed to the sadhana. The pleasure attached to the act, is a degradation and distortion of the true divine Ananda. This Yoga seeks to transform the nature; so the sadhak should aim at a complete mastery over the sex-force. Otherwise the vital consciousness remains turbid and seriously hampers progress. This impurity prevents the ascent of the lower being to the higher consciousness and its descent to transform mind, life and body. "The total ascent is impossible so long as sex-desire blocks

^{1.} Sri Aurobindo and the Mother on Food and Life, p. 38

the way; the descent is dangerous so long as sexdesire is powerful in the vital."1

The vital excitement that accompanies the sexual act and the vibration in the atmosphere are a most favourable condition for the inrush of those very vital forces and beings whose whole business is to prevent the descent of the Supramental Light. The Mother says, "The adverse forces are connected with sexual desire. They live on the energy wasted when the act takes place. And even a thought, a mental or vital desire is sufficient to let them come in and settle in the atmosphere."2

The true and full union wish the Divine cannot be effected unless the sex-desire is eliminated from the nature. So a sexual relation or sexual enjoyment is absolutely forbidden in the sadhana. But mere suppression is not enough for mastery. One cannot subdue the sex-impulses by always thinking of them and making a struggle to keep them down. We cannot prevent them from coming out in some kind of action, if we remain full of sex thoughts. A better way is to turn the mind towards the Divine or keep it engaged in some higher pursuits, such as the reading of good books, cultivation of fine arts and so forth. Sri Aurobindo says, "The sadhak has to turn

^{1.} Bases of Yoga, pp. 94-5

^{2.} Mother India, July '68

away entirely from the invasion of the vital and the physical by the sex-impulse—for, if he does not conquer the sex-impulse, there can be no settling in the body of the divine consciousness and the divine Ananda."

WiThe one most desirable thing in this Yoga is that the sex-desire should be altogether rejected from the nature. The elimination comes by a double process of detachment and rejection. The sadhak must not regard the impulse as his own but imposed on him by a force of the Nature outside. He should stand back, detach himself and refuse to assent to the imposition. Each movement of rejection throws the desire more and more outward. At first the mind does not lend support, then the vital and lastly the physical being also do not give any response. The victory becomes complete when sex is driven out of the environmental consciousness. But the lower vital, chief support of sex, is often too strong to submit to a mental or moral control. So the sadhak should call in the Divise Force to help him in his withdrawal and refusal of assent. When the psychic is fully awake, it brings greater control and also calls in the Divine Shakti for the work of transformation. The sex-desire is annulled when the supramental Bliss descending into the physical overfloods it with the divine Ananda.

^{1.} Bases of Yoga, p. 88

Some medical men are of opinion that sex is a necessity like food and sleep and that its total inhibition may lead to serious psychological disorders. But this happens when there is sceret indulgence of a perverse kind or a kind of subtle vital action by means of imagination. But a true spiritual effort at mastery brings little or no harm. Many doctors in Europe hold that genuine sexual abstinence is beneficial; for the force in the semen, rctas, is changed into a primal physical energy, called ojas, which feeds the energies of the system, mental, vital and physical. This justifies the Indian idea of brhmacharya or excision of sex by which retas is changed into ojas which is ultimately transformed into a spiritual force.

Various mechanical methods are resorted to for control or elimination of the sex-impulse; but all have been found ineffective. The act of purting the flesh is no remedy, though it may be a temporary diversion. Reduction of diet has not usually a permanent effect. Withdrawal from life is neither possible nor desirable; our object is not rejection but transformation of life. Some sadhakas lead a double inner life, divided between their spiritual experience, and their vital weaknesses in the hope that the latter will drop off with the fall of the body. But the true mastery and transformation of the vital being can be done only if the sadhak allows his psychic being to awake and to establish its rule over the nature. The psychic will open all to the

permanent touch of the Divine Shakti which will remove all vital impurities by its transforming action. There is no other way (nanyah pantha) of rooting out sexual desise from the vital nature.

2IV)

C. CONTROL OF SPEECH

Most people take pleasure in light or idle talk. Such talk disperses the mind and has a tendency to externalise the being'. For it proceeds from the lower vital and the physical mind which are chiefly concerned with external objects. Useless conversation lowers the consciousness and dissipates the energy. People who are very vital cannot do without talk, which is often of a frivolous nature. But such tendency is a disability from the spiritual point of view. It disables one to go inward and maintain the inner peace and concentration. Control over the impulse to speech is essential to yogic silence and self-mastery. But this control is very difficult, as speech in most people is largely automatic and habits of the physical nature are always difficult to change. The mind cannot control speech, as it is a subconscient habit that goes on mechanically even when the mind refuses its consent and support. Constant vigilance, great perseverance and a strong resolution are needed to acquire control.

The change becomes more easy, when the psychic is awake and intervenes to stop any random talk. By

opening the movement to the Mother's Light and Force one can gain control in a short time and sometimes with a great rapidity. But as speech is something mechanical, it is very difficult to connect it with a higher consciousness. One has to stand back as a witness of one's own mind and speech, then put a control over them and reject what is untrue or undesirable. This witness attitude cannot of course be established at once, nor this power of control and rejection. What is really needed here is an inner silence that remains indifferent to and untouched by any outer talk and action. But this duplication of the being comes perfectly only when the peace within is very strong and durable.

Absolute silence is not however desirable, as that isolates too much; it is an extreme that should be avoided. But one should always peak with a conscious control and only what is necessary and helpful. The habit of external silence is very valuable for a person living a common life with others. This habit will enable him to hold back before he throws out into words any outburst of anger, violence or temper and avoid many a quarrel which often results from incontinence in speech. One very desirable thing here is to avoid all debate, dispute or heated discussion that brings agitation and a lowering of the consciousness. Besides one must form the habit of speaking always the plain and simple truth without distorting, suppress-

ing or exaggerating anything. Austerity in speech is very desirable, if one is to succeed in truly changing the lower mechanical nature.

D. SLEEP AND DREAM

Sleep is necessary for the body's rest and the renewal of the vital-physical force. The body should not be deprived of sleep and food out of an ascetic idea or ideal. Suppression of sleep makes the body tamasic and unfit for necessary work or sadhana during the waking hours. But sleep is usually disturbed by a number of useless, and tiresome dreams. What we call dreamless slumber is not really dreamless; for dreams are always going on in some plane of the being during sleep. We forget our dreams, because dreams occur in different planes through which we pass at night, and paturally we do not remember what takes place in one plane as we move on to another.

It is desirable to avoid useless dreams which prevent one from getting real rest. Such dreams may however be useful as indications of the inner condition of the being, For dreams often indicate existing movements and propensities in us whether detected or not by the waking mind. Through them we come to preceive some of the tendencies, tastes, impulses and desires of which we are not conscious in our waking condition. Dreams may also raise up deformities that are either passively stored or still active in the subconscient. All

this undesirable stuff should be changed or got ric of in order that the nature may be transformed. If we can interpret dreams, we can get much knowledge of the secrets of our nature. Dreams may thus serve as effective aids towards mastery over our uncontrolled nature. We should, therefore, observe our dreams with attention and utilise them as means of rising to a higher level of consciousness.

In sleep some action is always going on in some plane of our being. The consciousness goes into other planes and has experiences there which influence our waking consciousness. The inner being rising into the upper regions may establish a contact with some higher centre of life or of light that may deeply influence the outer life. Or by passing through the inner planes, one may reach the psychic centre to repose in its bliss and peace, which brings new force and vigour into our active life. Or the consciousness may go up into the vital world where one may have experiences either baneful or beneficial to our spiritual life. Again by plunging into some obscure part of the nature, one may lose all the progress laboriously acquired in the conscious hours. One has then to make similar efforts over and over again to recover lost ground. Or one may fall absolutely unconscious into the subconscient, which is almost death. Besides restless activities in the dream rob us of the peaceful slumber so necessary for the ease of mind and body.

The above evils of uncontrolled sleep may be avoided if one becomes conscious in sleep and gains control. By remaining conscious one can have the same control over the being at night as in the day. The conscious will acting upon the dreams may change the whole course of the dream-experience. One goes inside and remains conscious within and has visions and experiences of one's own inner planes or of worlds of cosmic consciousness. Such dreams may also be symbolic visions giving exact indications of circumstances and of the inner condition of people. They have a meaning which may be known by proper interpretation. They may give the clue to a perplexing problem, help in coming to a difficult decision or reveal something wrong in the consciousness. They may also be indications of some occurrence actual or probable in the past, present or future. All these things, "if fully followed out bring a constant growth of the being and the consciousness and its richness of experience and its scope."1

Sri Aurobindo says: "Sleep, because of its subconscient basis, usually brings a falling down to a lower level, unless it is a conscious neep; to make it more and more conscious is the one permanent remedy."² But the question is how to become conscious in

^{1.} Letters, Vol. I, p. 185

^{2.} Bases of Yoga, p. 124

sleep. It is only by becoming conscious that one can get control over the sleep and utilise it for higher working. To gain this object it is necessary to concentrate for a few minutes before going to sleep. This may be done by means of a prayer, an aspiration or a power of will. One may offer up a prayer for fielp or aspire to grow more conscious in sleep or put forth a power of will for a specific object before going to sleep. All these are efficient for becoming conscious or getting control over sleep state. One may concentrate with the eyes closed, lying down or sitting up for a time, if necessary, before going to sleep. But one has "to pass into sleep in the concentration, that is to say, sleep must become a concentrated going inside away" from the outer waking state."

The practice of concentration takes a long time to succeed, but one must persever; till a response comes from the physical consciousness. Besides one may remember the Mother and open to the Force, which will give the protection against harmful dreams in the vital region. Above all, if one clings to the divine Truth, rejecting all else in the waking state, all the inferior dream stuff will get clear in time. Then instead of sinking into the subconscient inertia one may have 'special experiences of an uplifting character in the time of sleep'. Besides when the inner being

^{1.} Correspondence with Sri Aurobindo, 2nd Series, by Nirodbaran

awakes by sadhana, ordinary dreams are changed into dream experiences, precise visions or even dream revelations. Dreams may thus become a powerful help for progress instead of being an agent for obscuring the consciousness.

E. ILLNESS_ITS CAUSE AND CURE

"Attacks of illness are attacks of the lower nature or of adverse forces taking advantage of some weakness, opening or response in the nature." Illness is the outcome of imperfection or weakness or openness to hostile forces in the physical nature; it may also be due to some obscurity or disharmony in the lower vital or other members. The forces of illness come from the outside and have to be thrown away like all other intruders. They come into the subconscient and soon rise upwards to invade the whole system. Very often they attack direct through the Environmental Being, the subtle vital envelope which is our protective covering.

The intruding illness may be avoided if the outer covering remains strong, vigorous and intact. "If one is conscious of the subtle body or with the subtle consciousness, one can stop an illness on its way and prevent it from entering the physical body." But it

^{1.} Bases of Yoga, p. 133

^{2.} Bases of Yoga, p. 136

may have come unnoticed when one is asleep or off one's guard or through the subconscient; then one has to fight it out from its hold upon the body. One has to awaken a strong will for rejection in the higher parts, which will drive away the force of illness from the physical system. But this process of rejection by will-power is difficult owing to resistance of inertia in Matter. One has to increase the will-power by constant practice, abhyasa, till it becomes able to cure. But if the consciousness in the body itself can be induced to will for rejection of illness, then the central consciousness will be able to act more promptly and powerfully and rid the system of its malady.

Another means of control of the body is to separate the inner consciousness from the body—to feel that not the inner being but the body is suffering from illness and affecting the consciousness. One can then act upon the body and change its consciousness and reactions. Much patience is required to gain the power of control of the body or a particular illness. But when the will-power increases by practice, it will become able to eure a malady which is not too obstinate. One can also get rid of an illness by opening to the Divine Force. When by such opening the Force descends into the physical part, it removes the illness by the effective action of its remedial power. But this too is difficult because the body is the last part to open up entirely. Not only the mind but the lower

vital must for such opening have faith in and respond to the Force without any resistance.

As the body consciousness becomes more open to the Force, the illness will diminish and then disappear. But when the resistance in the body is too strong and persistent, it may be necessary to take some aid of physical means. Medical treatment, however, should be taken as a support to the Force, which can then work through means both physical as well as supraphysical. "But it is always the right inner poise, quietude inward and outward, faith, the opening of the body consciousness to the Mother and her Force, that are the true means of recovery—other things can only be minor aids and devices."

The Mother says that all illness without exception is the expression of a break in equilibrium.* Illness comes when an unbalance occurs anywhere in the system. The unbalance may be either mental or vital or physical. Mental unbalance results from dark ideas, worries, anxieties and frightful formations. Vital unbalance originates from too violent passion or emotion or disappointment. Physical unbalance takes place when an organ is defective or deformed or when it does not function properly. Whenever an

^{1.} Letters, Vol. IV, p. 538

^{*} The statement about illness that follows is based upon the 'Mother's talk to children' published in the Bulletin of Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education of February 1969.

unbalance happens, it may produce an illness, a distemper more or less severe. When an organ is concerned, one should spot the ailing organ, ask it to function properly and also tell it what must be done to set itself right. He will deal with it gently and patiently as with an unruly child that does not behave properly. Then the organ will take on the suggestion and regain its former health.

Again the unbalance may be due to disharmony among the different parts of the lower being. For the parts are frequently quarrelling among themselves. One part wants something, another does not; one part needs rest, while another insists upon action. Each presses for its own satisfaction without caring for the interest of others. This inner disharmony is the fruitful source of diseases—of cold, fever, shivering, loss of appetite and numerous other ailments. "Then in that case you must find out what the dispute is about, the reason of the dispute and know how to establish harmony among the people."

But the disharmony instead of being caused by any weakness or imperfection of lower nature may be the outcome of the pressure of Yogic force upon the system. The sadhak with great aspiration may receive spiritual force and make rapid progress. But a part of the being does not want to progress or has not the

^{1.} Bulletin Pondicherry, February '69

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capacity to make the necessary progress. The result will be that one part moves forward, while another does not move at all. This causes a terrible unbalance that expresses itself in a malady in the outer physical nature. Here the remedy is to find out the affected part, to detect the cause of the disorder and to re-establish the harmony, the proper functioning, through the pressure of the light, knowledge and spiritual force at one's command.

Moreover there are external causes that bring complication. There are certain small invisible entities that live in the subtle physical world. They constantly clash against and destroy or demolish one another. The severed parts or particles of these beings are the origin of germs or microbes that enter our body to operate there as destructive forces of disease and death. Again a hostile being may enter the system and cause the aggravation of a latent or nascent illness. The adversaries who are always watchful take the advantage of a spiritual error-a movement of vanity, of anger, of hatred, of violence or any other defect of nature-to enter within in order to do their work of destruction. Here the remedy mentioned above is not enough; one must add to it a great Force of spiritual purification to get rid of the intruder. All destructive forces are dissolved if they contact or come within the orbit of a constructive spiritual force. Therefore, when the Force shows itself or begins to work, the hostiles disappear or get destroyed and the illness is radically cured.

CHAPTER XXII

OBSTACLES ON THE PATH

The Divine may be difficult, but His difficulties con be overcome if one keeps at Him.

Each victory gained over oneself means new strength to gain more victories.

When difficulties arise, remain calm within and call down the Mother's Force to remove them.

Sri Aurobindo

It is a sincere self-giving that saves one from all difficulties and dangers.

The Mother

Yoga is a difficult thing requiring much patience and perseverance. To win success one has to face a host of difficulties and obstacles. These things come again and again in course of the sadhana and must be got over with both strength and patience. Human nature is made of Ignorance born out of the inconscience of the matrial world. It offers a strong resistance to any spiritual change demanded from it owing to its ingrained ignorance and inertia. There is often a conflict between the soul and the nature, when the former puts a pressure upon the latter for change of its habitual ignorant movements. The lower

elements consciously revolt against the higher will, when we try to rise above our ordinary external egoistic selves.

Another difficulty is inherent in the very nature of Yoga itself. Yogic practice requires intense self-effort, vigorous tapasya at least in the earlier stage. Besides the way of Yoga is long, arduous, dangerous and difficult, where each step forward is a battle. The seeker has to fight with thousands of seen or unseen enemies that are too subtle and formidable to confront and overcome. The practice of Yoga is therefore always difficult, it is perhaps the most difficult of all human aspirations and efforts. Nobody can win the crown of spiritual victory without painful struggles, none can reach the heights without the ascent and its labour. "There is no short cut or royal road to the Divine realisation."

The Mother says, "The difficulties are always due to a resistance, some part or several parts of the being refusing to receive the force, the consciousness and the light put upon them and revolting against the divine influence." The common form of resistance in the mind is ego, doubt and denial, attachment to fixed ideas and opinions, to mental preferences, prejudices and prejudgments. The mind doubts and denies the certitude of all truths, specially spiritual truths.

^{1.} Words of the Mother, 4th Series, p. 19

The vital nature resists with its vanity, egoism, desire and attachment to objects of desire, its constant habit of demand and many other obstacles. As the vital is very powerful, its obstruction, opposition or refusal of cooperation is highly effective. The physical nature offers resistance in the form of its ingrained in the lower movements. The tamasic element in Nature is powerful there having a tendency to inertia and inability, a constant readiness to doubt, to despond and despair, to renounce the aim and give up the sadhana. These are some of the obstacles of our nature which stand in the way of all who take to yogic practices.

Moreover there is the opposition of the universal Nature that resists any escape from its domination. The dark adverse forces in Nature want to keep their ancient rule over the human being and try to stop or arrest all spiritual progress and liberation from their bondage. Subjectively this opposition takes the form of waves of old ignorant movements—ideas, impulses, desires, feelings, responses—which return like an invading army from the outside even when they are thrown out and rejected. Objectively it comes as adverse conditions and cirumstances of all kinds such as opposition, persecution, pain, illness, assaults from men or forces.

We have two ways to meet and overcome the

attacks of adversaries and possibilities of our suffering. The first is the way of the psychic which, when it opens and becomes the master, removes the subjective suffering and the objective difficulties cannot affect either the soul or the inner consciousness. The other way is to call in the aid of the Mother's Force for help and protection. One may also concentrate one's consciousness in the heart and call her in there. As the Force works, a protection can come which helps or directly guides and moves us. It may or may not throw aside all difficulties, sufferings or dangers, but it carries us through them or out of them as if by a miracle. As the victory of the Force proceeds, the outer attacks and adverse circumstances too will no longer be able to impede the sadhara, rather they become a means for its advance and for the growth of the spirit. Sri Aurobindo says, "Do not allow yourself to be troubled or discouraged by any difficulties, but quietly and simply open yourself to the Mother's force and allow it to change you."1

Besides there are the bright and dark periods in the sadhana. Yoga is usually a series of ups and downs, 'a spiral of ascent and fall', till one gets to a certain spiritual height. Alterations of rise and fall, of good and bad conditions, of states of light and states of darkness, are common in all ways of yoga. "They are

^{1.} Letters, Vol. II, p. 875

the day and night of the Vedic-mystics." The fall is inevitable, for the nature is unprepared, absorbed in or attached to ordinary life and governed by movements of ignorance. There is also the tamas or inertia of the nature which always actively resists and tries to retard or break the sadhana. Spiritual experiences very rarely become permanent from the beginning; their intensity does not always remain the same. An experience comes and then withdraws behind the veil of the surface consciousness in endless rhythmic motion.

The ebb and flow in spiritual experience happen in order that the outer nature may become prepared and made ready to bear and hold fast, its increase and then its permanence. The human consciousness cannot at once receive and absorb a descent of the Light or power or Ananda: it needs periods of assimilation. So what has descended retires behind the veil, till the outer nature assimilates this and becomes ready for a new descent. The real reason of the constant alteration is the struggle between the true being within and The outer nature which is full of obscurity and ignorance. A sadhara persistent and unceasing is necessary, if one wants to go quickly to the goal of divine realisation. Only when the consciousness has become sufficiently pure and clear, one can first admit and then live in the higher consciousness at all times, in all conditions and all circumstances.

The period of alteration may easily be long in an

integral Yoga, for here an entire purification is required for transformation of the nature. Only a firm faith in the guidance of Guru or in the presence of the Power working behind the veil, a will to find out and remove any cause of obstruction, can shorten and alleviate, if not altogether abolish, the dark period. Always one must remain quiet, wait with certitude and be determined to go through to the end of the sadhana. One must rise above all despair, dejection or desparation as these are inimical to progress and success everywhere, Sri Aurobindo says, "If the sadhana has stopped for a time, then let it stop, remain quiet, do ordinary things, rest when rest is needed—wait till the physical consciousness is ready."

When the inertia in nature arises, one has to keep the inner being separate from its influence. By this separation, the aspiration of the inner being will spread and help to drive out the inertia from the system. Also if equality and the psychic will are there, these will bring an inner calm and confidence which will support one through all trials and difficulties. The Mother says that a strong resolve to make perfect surrender, a complete self-giving to the Divine Will, is the only safe retreat even amidst the greatest darkness. When a man has or gets the secret of trust or self-giving, he sees in every difficulty the grace or the guidance and

^{1.} Sri Aurobindo on Himself and on The Mother, p. 229

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proceeds with full confidence in the final victory. He feels that the Divine is with him always, he will help him to the goal and carry him even through the darkest period.

Hostile Forces—There are also hostile Forces that are not merely undivine like the lower nature but antidivine and opposed to the Yoga. They attack every sadhaka and indeed all persons without any cause for attacking. They influence man by distorting the lower nature and even try to enter and possess or at least entirely control him. Their favourite method is to awaken in the physical mind mistaken ideas, dark thoughts, fears, doubts and disbeliefs about the success of the sadhana. They try to rob the sadhaka of the fruits of his sadhana not for any profit but for preventing the divine manifestation. The more he progresses, the more they try to attack him, to stop or delay the progress and spoil his sadhana. An experience is frequently followed by a reaction, because the adverse forces try to stop on break the experience. The evil forces always attack us in moments of unconsciousness or half consciousness. So one should always remain conscious and vigilant so that nothing admits them and by that means cast out the possibility of their attack.

Sri Aurobindo suggests the following method to counter the attacks of evil forces: "An entire rejection and a complete turning to the Divine are the way to

meet them." There must be a constant and steady denial and refusal of their suggestions. One must resolutely shut them out, refuse to think of them and in no case dwell upon them. The wrong movements will recede before the growing will power or melt away, if already inside, for want of supporting attention. A detachment of the consciousness is also necessary so that one may stand apart and feel separate from the attack; this will give the necessary strengh for victory and rejection. "To observe the movements as a witness without being discouraged or disturbed is the best way to effect the necessary detachment and separation."2 Also if one has a complete faith and self-consecration, one can cast off the attack without too much difficulty. When an adverse force comes, one should turn to the Mother and remain loyal and faithful to her. Loyalty and fidelity will give the power to stand against the hostiles and enable the Protection to work for deliverance.

The Ego—The greatest obstacle to our progress is the separative ego. Every part of the being—mental, vital and physical—is full of ego. Every action of man, whether good or bad, all his virtues as well as vices, even his love and liking are prompted by egoistic motives. The first stages of sadhana are very naturally

^{1.} Letters, Vol. IV, p. 357

^{2.} On Yoga II, Tome Two, p. 764

ego-centric. "The main idea in it is always one's own endeavour, own development, perfection, siddhi." But for purposes of fulfilment these things should be treated as of secondary importance. The sole aim should be love and bhakti for the Divine and ongness with the Divine in consciousness, will, heart and body. Sri Aurobindo says, "The remedy is to think constantly of the Divine, not of oneself, to work, to act, do sadhana, for the Divine; not to consider how this or that affects me personally, not to claim anything, but to refer all to the Divine. It will take time to do that sincerely and thoroughly, but it is the proper way." 2

The true attitude in all movements comes when the psychic takes control of the nature. The psychic brings complete surrender and true love and bhakti for the Divine, which can dissolve all traces of the ego. For, when the psychic opens, it offers the ego and all the movements to the Divine, so that one becomes unegoistic through self-giving and surrender. A steady and persistent rejection is also necessary to work the ego out of the system. The Mother gives the following advice: "Every time the ego shows itself, you must give it a tap on the nose, until it receives so much of it that it gets tired and gives up." Sri Aurobindo says

^{1.} Letters, Vol II, p. 402

^{2.} On Yoga II, Tome Two, pp. 467-8

^{3.} The Yoga of Sri Aurobindo, Part VIII, by Nalini Kanta Gupta

that the most effective force for liberation from the ego is the psychic control along with speedy rejection.

Moreover the realisation of the true Self-of the true mental, vital and physical—is also necessary for liberation from the ego. The opening of the true self brings wideness, peace and silence into which the egocan dissolve. When the being becomes universal, the limits of the ego are naturally broken. The same result ensues when the individual nature becomes united with the cosmic nature. The I-ness disappears and the mental, vital and physical beings appear to be derivatives from the Universal Mind, the Universal Life and Universal Matter. The ego-idea is the false notion that I am a separately self-existent being in the universe. To get out of it, one has to dwell in the opposite idea of unity, the idea of one self, the one spirit and the one-being of all nature. But a mere intellectual perception is not enough to liberate from the ego; there must be "a realisation in the very soul substance of our being." We must have soul perception, a spiritual experience, of the one spirit dwelling and working in all animate and inanimate objects of the world. The realisation of the Cosmic Divine, its cosmic manifestation, the divine lila, is one very potent means of removal of the ego.

A descent of the wide ego-free consciousness from the higher planes above is another sovereign way of removal of the ego. To get out of the selfish egosense one has to call down divine consciousness to which the ego is not a necessity. According to the Mother, a total surrender to the Divine is the one sure and swift means of removal of the ego. She says that "when one abandons oneself to the supreme Reality, the supreme Will, the supreme Being, relying wholly on him in a yearning of the whole being, without calculation, that is the quickest and most radical way of getting rid of the ego." Self-giving in fact denotes a change from the ego-centric to the God-centric consciousness. The fulfilment of the ego lies in the absolute surrender of itself to the Divine.

To get rid of the ego entirely, the sadhaka must open himself constantly and consciously to the Mother's Force; he should always feel her Force working in him and guiding and inspiring his movements and actions. The Mother says, "You must feel at every moment that you belong to the Divine; you must have the constant experience that, in whatever you think or do, it is always the Divine consciousness that is acting through you." But there must also be an entire reliance upon the Mother and a complete surrender to her guidance. A detailed and dynamic surrender of all movements—all thoughts, feelings and actions—will open the whole being and then her infinite

^{1.} Bulletin, Pondicherry, November '58

^{2.} Words of the Mother, pp. 78-4

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Force will enter into us and begin its sovereign working for the extirpation of the very self of ego. Openness to the Mother's Force along with a total surrender is the best means of the elimination of ego from every part of the nature.

The Vital Being—The difficulties of this part are due to its inherent obscurity, falsehood and ignorance. The vital is not governed by reason or knowledge but by instinct and impulse and the desire of pleasure. The vital nature is always restless and full of desires and because of these it has no happiness. When the vital rises up one has feelings of unfitness, despondency and lack of pleasure in anything. Moreover, the demands of the vital are exacting and its reactions bring great depression, violent passions and obstinate revolt. It does not want to fulfil the sadnana unless it gets by it the things it wanted.

The resistance in the vital part is due to the pressure upon it to change which is implied in the sadhana. If one takes the right attitude of courage, endurance and cheerfulness, the vital depression or resistance slowly or quickly wears away. One has to observe the wrong movements, to separate oneself from them and persist in rejecting them whenever they come, till the vital becomes quiet and clear. This is the negative way of rejection. The positive way is to remain quiet, to place reliance on the Divine, to refer all movements or surrender them to the Divine for

their elimination or purification and transformation. Sri Aurobindo says, "You may have all the mental knowledge in the world and yet be impotent to face vital difficulties. Courage, faith, sincerity towards the Light, rejection of opposite suggestions and adverse voices are there the true help. Then only can knowledge itself be effective."

One preliminary stage in the change of the vital being is to become aware of the true vital consciousness in the inner being. This consciousness is always pure, calm, wide, strong, firm and immovable. Being without ego, it is devoid of ambition and free from all demand and desire. When this true being manifests, one remains always calm, strong and detached, even though the outer part is troubled or obscure. At length the inner calm, peace and strength begin toemerge from the depths and express themselves moreand more overtly in the outer being. The true vital being upon coming forward brings in a solid power for victory, repels all enemies and opens the vital to a greater consciousness above. Then the impurities of the vital, its desire and egoism, are burnt away and its power is transformed into a pure dynamis of the soul.

Another efficacious way of purifying the vital is tobring it into touch with the Divire Force or the

^{1.} On Yoga II, Tome Two, v. 418

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dynamic power of the psychic consciousness. This contact will enable it to follow a greater light and knowledge and obey a purer impulsion coming from the higher sources. When the vital being is joined to the psychic, then it fills with the pure aspiration and devotion natural to the psychic; at the same time, it gives a dynamic energy to the feelings for the change of the whole nature down to the most physical. A better way will be if one can keep the contact with the Mother and her Light and Force and receive and accept and follow only what comes from that higher source. The wrong vital movements will then be replaced by right ones which will be governed by selflessness, purity, love, obedience to the Divine Force in all things of life. The illumined vital will offer itself to the Mother's control and by constantly answering to the Mocher's force cast away its ordinary impure movements. Then it regains its true consciousness and aspires to become an instrument of the Divine Energy.

The descent of the higher consciousness into the vital is however the most effective means of removing vital difficulties. For dealing with the vital difficulties, the mental control is not always successful; it needs to be replaced by a greater control belonging to a higher consciousness above the mind. "Not mental control but the descent of a control from above the mind is the power demanded for realisation. This control

derived eventually from the Supermind is a control by the Divine Power." To open oneself and call down peace, faith, calm, strength ino the vital being itself (and specially in the part of it that is defective) is the proper course for the vital change. When the vital is governed by the spiritual light and power, it becomes full of calm, purity and strong peace. The transformed vital becomes fit for the divine or spiritual action, for complete expression.

The Physical Being-The physical consciousness means the physical mind and the physical vital as well as the body consciousness proper. The physical sadhana is to bring down the higher light, power, peace and Ananda into the physical part, and by their help to get rid of its many serious defects and to make it a fit instrument of the Divine will. Its nature is to cling to old habitual movements and shrink from yogic consciousness. It is inert, mechanical and conservative; it does not want to move or change and repeats things by force of old habits. "It is obscure, stupid, indolent full of ignorance and inertia, darkness and slowness of tamas."2 The change of this part is the most difficult of all changes, because it is the most animal part of the human being.' The resistance is heavier here and the progress slower than on the mental and vital planes.

^{1.} Letters, Vel. II, p. 373

^{2.} On Yoga II, Tome Two, p. 525

But as a compensation, the fulfilment, when it comes, becomes the more complete, solid and durable. Once the physical part is changed, it makes possible the total change of the whole being and nature.

The habits of the physical seem unalterable because of their constant recurrence. A quiet persistent aspiration for change is a powerful help to break off past habits however fixed or obstinate. Patient work with full faith and steady will is indispensable for this part of the sadhana. A sadhana of self-discipline is particularly necessary for the physical vital where inner experiences are not very helpful. "The external actions and the spirit in them must change—your external thoughts and actions must be for the Divine only. There must be self-restraint, entire truthfulness, a constant thought of the Divine in all you do. This. is the way for the change of the lower vital."1 Another way is to detach oneself from the physical mind, remaining at the back of the mind quiet and separate. Instead of trying to control or fight with or suppress it, one stands back, looks at it but refuses. to follow its thoughts or run about among the objects it pursues. This separation and quietude will bring the right attitude and give a greater power of control than any effort of tapasya.

Another more efficient method is to open the:

^{1.} On Yoga II, Tome Two, p. 537

physical consciousness to the psychic light or the Divine Power. The sadhaka has to make this part accustom to follow always the psychic light and guidance or obey the Divine Power in case of a difficulty. This practice brings a yet greater control by pressure of the dynamic spiritual power that is native to a higher principle above the ordinary mind. The best remedy however is to call down from above the light and force of the higher planes into the physical parts. The light brings the consciousness of the defects and the force follows to work upon them till they change or disappear. Then the physical becoming free from its habitual indolence, obscurity and incapacity is converted into a perfect instrument for the Divine Will.

The Subconscient—The roots of our physical being lie in the subconscient and inconscient out of which it has evolved. The habits, tendencies and impulses of the physical derive from these parts and are supported by their force of inertia. Therefore a purification or change of the physical being cannot be complete—unless the nether parts are corrected and cleansed of their deformities. The subconscient is made up of impressions, instincts, recurring movements that are stored up there. This part is the chief support of all habitual movements; it is the cause why things repeat themselves and seldom get really changed. Things rejected from the conscious parts take refuge in the subconscient. These seeds or samaskaras come up

again from there into the higher parts. All kinds of lust, greed, sex trouble, animal instincts spring out of the subconscient where they lie concealed and ready for emergence at the least opportunity. This part by constantly repeating the old movements that are undesirable prevents the progress of the sadhana. We have to illumine and change it by bringing down the higher consciousness, otherwise the old samaskaras may sprout up again from this nether base.

When the sadhaka has to work in the subconscient region, a great mass of past impressions (old thoughts, interests, desires, hostile dreams) sometimes rise up to occupy the consciousness. But they come up in order to be dissolved and cleared out from the being. The one thing required is to refuse to be disturbed by their emergence and reject them by the power of the intelligent will. One has to stand back, detach and separate oneself and let them pass till they settle down. But we can do little or nothing to change the submerged part by our conscious will. One can get rid of its opposition, minimise its difficulties, only when one lives wholly in and acts from the inner being and separates oneself from the outer nature.

But by means of contact or union with a higher consciousness alone or even by living in it, one cannot change the subconscient. The old samaskaras remain to bar and block the way to progress. To transform this nether being we must open ourselves by aspiration

to the divine Force, which will bring down from above its light and control. The subconscient itself will then open to the higher consciousness, which will descend with its light, power, peace and purity. These spiritual powers will either gradually or rapidly remove all difficulties and resistance. Then the subconscient becomes conscient and instead of being the refuge of the ignorant and obscure movements becomes a pure mould of the spirit, "a store of right impressions, right physical responses to the Truth."

The Inconscient—The Inconscient is the basis of the earthly and bodily physical as experienced by the senses. Nescience reigns here—it is apparently without any life, mind or consciousness. This part is the foundation of the Ignorance out of which all else has evolved. It is full of tamas, the dark inertia whose companions are dullness, gloom and despondency. The remedy of its defects is to get the light of aspiration into the part. But to open if to the light seems an almost impossible task; change on the other e levels is much easier. For the material part unlike the others is altogether inert, "active when driven by an energy, otherwise inactive or immobile." old obscure movements persistently recur when the sadhaka tries to get rid of them. Even the strongest mental or vital or even psychic will is unable to push out its deep-rooted inertia.º

We have to bring down the Truth not only into the

upper parts of the physical, but into the gross Matter, the most material plane. To change the most physical art, the one thing required is to have the right attitude, faith in one's power and in the divine help and guidance. The next thing is the will to transform oneself and the vigilance to perceive and reject the tamasic ego and the indolence of the lower nature. Finally, one must always keep oneself open to the Mother's Force in every part of the being. Then the Force will be able to descend and carry on its action. of transformation without any let or hindrance. "The only thing to do here is to get the physical consciousness-down to the most material parts-open to the Power, then to make it accustomed to respond and obey and, to each physical difficulty as it arises, apply or call in the divine Power to throw out the attacking force."1 When the physical being opens fully, there will be stable descent of calm, strength, purity and joy into the whole system. The outcome will be dynamic transformation of the entire natury, of mind, vital and body, which will become an obedient instrument and open channel of expression of the Soul and Spirit.

The sadhana in the physical plane is the most difficult part of the Yoga. The powers of the Ignorance reign there in full force and obstruct the passage of the Light from higher planes. Sri Aurobindo says that the

^{1.} On Yoga II, Tome Two, p. 750

hostile powers rage violently and attack the sadhak furiously when he has to descend to the physical to carry out the sadhana there. These powers make every effort and use or create every opportunity to maintain their present rule over the being. For the physical part is the last stronghold of their resistance. Here the first spiritual experiences soon fade away in the obscure inertia of the physical nature. The sadhak is almost overpowered by doubt, depression, despair, dryness and disbelief. These and other kindred things come up with great force and prevail in the consciousness.

The yogi on coming down into this lowest region finds himself lost in its mist, mire and clay. He feels like an ordinary man or worse, altogether in the outer consciousness and the physical earth-nature which is full of dark dismal formations. But the darkness of the physical nature must be faced and overcome in order that the true light may reign supreme. "It is there that the Light, the Power, the Ananda of the Divine has to descend and transform everything, driving away for ever all obscurity and all inertia and establishing the radiant Energy, the perfect Light and the unchanging Bliss. There and not in the mind or the higher vital is all the difficulty, but there too must be the victory and the foundation of the New World."

^{1.} On Yoga, II, Tome Two, p. 518

APPENDIX

A. QUOTED PASSAGES

The Price of Siddhi in Yoga—You must gather yourself within more firmly. If you disperse yourself constantly, go out of the inner circle, you will constantly move about in the pettiness of the ordinary outer nature and under the influences to which it is open. Learn to live within, to act always from within, from a constant communion with the Mother. It may be difficult at first to do it always and completely, but it can be done if one sticks to it and it is at that price, by learning to do that, that one can have the Siddhi in the Yoga.—Letters, Vol. IV, Page: 161.

The Method of the Yoga—The sadhana of this Yoga does not proceed through any set mental. teaching or prescribed forms of meditation, mantras or others, but by aspiration, by a self-concentration inwards or upwards, by self-opening to an Influnce, to the Divine Power above us and its workings, to the Divine Presence in the heart and by the rejection of all that is foreign to these things. It is only by faith, aspiration and surrender that this self-opening carr come.—Lights on Yoga, Page 4.

Four Ways of Changing the Nature—Merely to have experiences of the higher consciousness will not change the nature. Either the higher consciousness has to make a dynamic descent into the whole being and change it; or it must establish itself in the inner being down to the inner physical so that the latter feels itself separate from the outer and is able to act freely upon it; or the psychic must come forward and change the nature; or the inner will must awake and force the nature to change. These are the four ways in which change can be brought about.—Letters, Vol. IV, Page 367.

Four Ways of Receiving the Mother's Force—First there is the faith, or sometimes a mental realisation and this of itself is enough to make one open to the Mother's force so that it is always available at need or call. Even if one does not feel the Force coming, yet the results are there and visible. The next is when one feels cheself like an instrument and is aware of the Energy using it. A, third is the contact with the Power above and its descent (spontaneous or at call) into the body—this is the more concrete way of having it, for one physically feels the Force working in one. Finally there is a state of consciousness of close contact with the Mother (inward) which brings a similar result.—On Yoga II, Tome Two, Page 308.

The Inner Relation with the Mother-An inner

(soul) relation means that one feels the Mother's presence, is turned to her at all times, is aware of her force moving, guiding, helping, is full of love for her and always feels a great nearness whether one is physically near her or not. This relation takes up the mind, vital and inner physical till one feels one's mind close to the Mother's mind, one's vital in harmony with hers, one's very physical consciousness full of her. These are all the elements of the inner union, not only in the spirit and self but in the nature.—

Letters of Sri Aurobindo on the Mother, Pages 100-1.

The Inner Surrender-The core of the inner surrender is trust and confidence in the Divine. One takes the attitude, I want the Divine and nothing else. I want to give myself entirely to him and since my soul wants that, it cannot be but that I shall meet and realise him. I ask nothing but that and his action in me to bring me to him, his action secret or open, veiled or manifest. I do not insist on my own time and way : let him do all in his own time and way, I shall believe in him, accept his will, aspire steadily for his light and presence and joy, go through all difficulties and delays, relying on him and never giving up. Let my mind be quiet and turn to him alone and let him open it to his calm and joy. All for him and myself for him. Whatever happens I will keep to this aspiration and self-giving and go on in perfect reliance that it will

be done. Sri Aurobindo Came to Me by Dilip Kumar Roy, Page 192.

True Attitude in Work—This happens when the work is associated with the Mother's thought, done as an offering to her, with the call to do it through you. All ideas of ego, all association of egoistic feelings with the work must disappear. One begins to feel the Mother's Force doing the work, the psychic grows through a certain inner attitude behind the work and the adhar becomes open both to the psychic intuitions and influences from the within and to the descent from above. Then the result of meditation can come through the work itself.—Letters, Vol. II, Page 473.

Total Transformation—It is not by taking a mere mental attitude that this can, be done or even by any number of inner experiences which leave the outer man as he was. It is the outer man who has to open, to surrender and to change. His every least movement, habit, action has to be surrendered, seen, held up and exposed to the divine Light, offered to the divine Force for its old forms and motives to be destroyed and the divine Truth and the action of the transforming consciousness of the Divine Mother to take their place.—Lights on Yoga, Page 49.

True Movement in Sadhana.—What do you call meditation? Shutting the eyes and concentrating? It is only one method of calling down the true

consciousness. To join with the true consciousness or feel its descent is the only thing important and if it comes without the orthodox method, as it always did with me, so much the better. Meditation is only one means or device, the true movement is when walking, working or speaking, one is still in sadhana. _Letters, Vol. II, Page 474.

The Guide and the Goal,—Find the Guide secret within you or housed in an earthly body, hearken to his voice and follow always the way that he points. At the end is the Light that fails not, the Truth that deceives not, the Power that neither strays nor stumbles, the wide freedom, the ineffable Beatitude. _The Hour of God, Page 102.

B. CHAKRAS AND THEIR FUNCTION

The Chakras or yogic centres of consciousness and energy are seven in number. They are subtle channels of pranic energy which flows and functions through each of them. They control the different . parts of the being as set forth below from bottom to top. They are seen as lotuses with varying colours. and specific number of petals. The chakras are not. visible to the physical eye, but they can be seen and located by the eye of the subtle vision.

1. Muladhar or physical centre at the end of the spine four petals, red governs the physical consciousness down to the subconscient. Therefore it controls our purely physical and subconscient movements. The Kundalini or Yoga Shakti whose symbol is the serpent lies asleep in the muladhar.

- 2. Abdominal Centre or swadhisthana—six petals, deep purple red—governs the lower vital: small vital movements, little greeds, lusts, desires, etc.
- 3. Naval Centre, navipadma or manipura, the dynamic life-centre—ten petals, violet—governs the higher vital (proper): larger life-forces and passions and larger desire movements.
- 4. Heart Centre, hridpadma or anahata—twelve petals, golden pink—governs the higher vital or emotional being with the psychic seated behind it.

 "The heart centre commands the psychic and vital—that opening enables the psychic influence to work in the vital and ends in the coming forward of the psychic."—On Yoga II, Tome One, Page 377. The physical heart is in the left side, but the heart centre of yoga is in the middle of the chest—the cardiac centre.
 - 5. Throat Centre or vishudha—sixteen petals, gray—governs the outward going and externalising mind which gives expression to idea and knowledge in life through speech or any other form of activity and functioning as the physical mind deals with outer and physical things. "It's opening brings the power to open the physical mind to the light of the divine

consciousness instead of remaining in the ordinary outward-going mentality."—On Yoga II, Tome One, Page 379.

- 6. Forehead Centre or ajnachakra—two petals, white—governs the dynamic or creative mind that puts out mental forces for realisation of ideas; it also controls the inner thought, will and vision belonging to the inner being beneath the surface. This chakra, located between the eyebrows in the middle of the forehead, is sometime called the third eye, because its opening brings the power of occult vision.
- 7. Thousand-petalled Letus or sahasradala padma—blue with gold light around—above the head governs the higher thinking mind, the illumined mind and acts as a receiving station for the intuition proper and overmind. It is the place where the ordinary consciousness meets with the higher planes and receives their spiritual forces.

The three centres ranging from the heart to the abdominal level is the domain of the vital being. All from the heart above is the domain of the mental being also connected with three centres. The heart centre is the seat of two powers—the higher vital or emotional being in front and the psychic behind and concealed. The chakras are supposed to be attached to the spinal chord but in reality they are in the subtle body, suksma sarira. To the seven well-known centres the Mother adds five

others that are less known:—(1) the knee, (2) the leg, (3) the feet, (4) the sole of the feet and (5) below the feet. The last one belongs to the domain of the Inconscient. She says that transformation can be complete only when the Light enters these centres of the subconscient and inconscient regions.

The consciousness ascends from and through the different levels (below the navel, navel, heart and head) to join the higher conscioulness above. Some become aware of the centres, but others simply feel the ascent or descent in a general way. Others again. feel the Force ascending or descending from level to level. rather than from centre to centre. The whole process. however results in the opening of the centres and of the inner planes-mental, vital and physical. But there is no fixed rule as to the order in which. the centres would open. Regarding the opening of the chakras Sri Aurobindo says, "In our yoga there. is no willed opening of the chakras, they open of themselves by the descent of the Force. Tantric discipline they open from down upwards, the Muladhar first; in our yoga, they open from up downward. But the ascent of the force from the Muladhardoes take place."—On Yoga, Vol. II, Tome One, Page 77.

. C. PARTS OF THE VITAL BEING

"There are four parts of the vital being_first, the mental vital which gives a mental expression by

thought, speech or otherwise to the emotions, desires passions, sensations and other movements of the vital being; the emotional vital which is the seat of various feelings, such as love, joy, sorrow, hatred, and the rest; the central vital which is the seat of the stronger vital longings and reactions, e.g. ambition, pride, fear, love of fame, attractions and repulsions, desires and passions of various kinds and the field of many vital energies; last, the lower vital which is occupied with small desires and feelings, such as make the greater part of daily life, e. g. food desire, sexual desire, small likings, dislikings, vanity, quarrels, love of praise, anger at blame, little wishes of all kinds and a numberless host of other things. Their respective seats are: (1) the region from the throat to the heart, (2) the heart (it is a double centre belonging in front to the emotional and vital and behind to the :psychic), (3) from the heart to the navel, (4) below the navel."_Dn Yoga II, Tome One, Pages 341-2.

Regarding the last part called the physical-vital or the physical part of the vital being, Sri Aurobindo remarks: "It is that which is concerned mainly with passing events and transitory movements. It is that which is irritated over trifles, easily upset. It gets exhiliration of joy very soon, is also very soon depressed. It is a restless part concerned with passing things and makes one restless." (Evening Talks with Sri Aurobindo, Part II, by A. B. Purani). But this

element of the nature, though very obscure and full of perversions, is yet an indispensable mediator between the inner being and the outer life; for it stretches down into the vital-physical where it supports the life of the more external activities.

D. NOTES ON TECHNICAL TERMS.

Concentration & Meditation—'Concentration means fixing the consciousness in one place or on one object and in a single condition.' (Letters, Vol. II, P. 144). Here the consciousness is gathered together to rest at a point or dwell on a particular object (e.g. the Divine) or state (e.g. peace) or movement (e.g. will or aspiration). But in meditation one need not gather together like this: here the inner mind is simply looking at things to get the right knowledge. The mind dwells not on a single idea but on a series of ideas and thoughts on a single subject for gaining a full knowledge about the thing. Meditation is a less intense concentration where the thoughts can be diffusive. Concentration or the capacity to converge the consciousness on one point, one single idea, is more difficult than meditation. The Mother says, "By concentration I mean all energies, all will, all aspirations should be turned only on the Divine and His integral realisation in our consciousness."

Consecration—'Consecration is a process by which

one trains the consciousness to give itself to the Divine'.

—Letters, Vol. IV, Page 125.

Conversion—'Conversion is a turning of the being away from lower things towards the Divine.'—On Yoga II, Tome One, Page 538. It can happen swiftly and suddenly as the result of a touch from within or above; but it may also come as the culmination of a long process of aspiration and tapasya.

Detachment—'Detachment means that one stands back from them (the imperfections and weaknesses of the nature); does not identify oneself with them or get upset or troubled because they are there, but rather looks on them as something foreign to one's true consciousness and true self, rejects them and calls in the Mother's Force into these movements to eliminate: "them and bring the true consciousness and its movements there."—On Yoga'II, Tome Two, Page 318.

Discipline—'Persistent, active or self-directed pursuit of some; selected course of action, even in the face of obstacles and distraction.'—Dictionary of Education edited by Carter V. Good:

Experience and Realisation—'When the consciousness undergoes, sees or feels anything spiritual or psychic or even occult, that is an experience—in the technical yogic sense.'—(On Yoga II, Tome Two, Page 6). Experience comes in flashes, snatches or rare intervals; when they become very positive or frequent or continuous or normal, they are spoken of as full realisation.

'Realisation is when the Truth becomes a settled part of the consciousness.' Letters, Vol. IV, Pages 275-6.

Force and Power-Force is the essential Shakti; Energy is the working drive of the Force, its active dynamism: Power is the capacity born of the Force'. -Letters, Vol. IV, Page 206.

Integration—This means a harmonisation of the conflicting parts of the personality brought about by the control and the working of a higher principle; 'a transformation more or less complete so as to admit of a total changed working of the whole being and nature.'-The Life Divine.

Light_'Light is just like the light you see, only subtle—it clarifies the consciousness and works as a force and makes knowledge possible.' (Letters, Vol. IV, Page 315). The word also means the illumination that comes from above and removes obscurity and darkness from the being and makes it fit for the true consciousness.—the result may be vision memory, knowledge, right will, right impulse, etc.

Openness is the will to receive and to utilise for progress the force and influence; a constant aspiration to remain in touch with the Consciousness; the faith that force and consciousness are always with you, around you, inside you and that you have only to let nothing stand in the way of your receiving them.'_ Words of the Mother, 4th Series, Pages 21-2.

Personality—The word means a personal form of

the consciousness and power of the Godhead. A personality, though an emanation of God, is yet an independent being exercising conscious power over some movement in the cosmos. The greater Gods and Goddesses are in this way various personalities of the Divine—ekam sat bahudha.

Presence—The word indicates 'the sense and perception of the Divine as a Being, felt as present in one's existence and consciousness or in relation with it without the necessity of any further qualification or description.'—On Yoga II, Tome One, Page 389.

Process—'A process means a series of actions leading to a particular result by certain recognised stages.'

—Yogic Sadhan by Uttara Yogi (Sri Aurobindo),
Page 17.

Pulling—'When one is open and too eager and tries to pull down the force, experience, etc., instead of letting it descend quietly, that is called pulling.'— (Sri Aurobiralo on Himself and on the Mother, Page 517). A mental or vital straining or pulling disturbs the workings of the force and tends to upset the nature by taking more than one can assimilate. But a steady drawing of the force is quite common and helpful.

Receptivity—'The power to receive the Divine Force and to feel its presence and the presence of the Mother in it and allow it to work, guiding one's sight and will and action'.—Bases of Yoga, Page 19.

Self and Spirit-By Self is meant the conscious

essential existence, one in all. (Letters, Vol. IV, Page 298). Self is impersonal, inactive, aloof and indifferent to what happens in the universe. Spirit refers to the more personal Essential Divine. He is the witness, support, lord and enjoyer of the forms and movements of Nature. Both stand above all things and remain separate from the creation even when pervading it. But the Divine Reality dwells in and informs everything in the malifestation.

Tapasya—'When the will and energy are concentrated and used to control the mind, vital and physical and change them or bring down the higher consciousness or for any other Yogic purpose or high purpose, that is called Tapasya',—Letters, Vol. IV, Page 131.

Trust and Confidence—'Trust—the feeling of sure expectation of another's help and reliance upon his word, character, etc. Confidence—the sense of security that goes with trust'.—Letters, Vol. IV, Page 127.

Undivine—'The undivine is the falsehood, the ignorance, the error of the dark forces; the undivine is all that is obscure and unwilling to accept the Divine Truth and its light, and force. The undivine, therefore, is all that is unwilling to accept the light and force of the Mother.'—Letters of Sri Aurobindo on the Mother, Page 57.

Unification—'Unification means organisation and harmonisation of all the parts of the being (mental, vital and physical) around the psychic centre, so that

all the activities of the being may be the correct expression of the will of the Divine Presence. —Words of the Mother, 4th Series, Page 12.

Universalisation—The word means the widening of the being resulting from union with Cosmic Self and Cosmic Nature—the universal Mind, the universal Life and the universal Form. 'To see all things in the self and the self in all things—to be aware of one being everywhere, aware directly of the different planes, their forces, their beings—that is universalisation.'—On Yoga II, Tome One, Page 328.

Victory—'By the victory is meant the final emergence of the embodied consciousness on earth from the bondage of the Ignorance.'—Sri Aurobindo on Himself and on the Mother, Page 359.

Yogi and Sadhak—, The Yogi is one who is already established in realisation—the sadhak is one who is getting or still trying to get realisation.—Letters, Vol. IV, Page 236.

E. SELECT SAYINGS

1. Words of the Master

To turn to the Divine is the only truth in life.

The perfection of man lies in the unfolding of the everperfect Spirit.

All life is only a lavish and manifold opportunity given us to discover, realise, express the Divine.

All error, like all evil, is born of a division in the indivisible.

Truth is the foundation of real spirituality and courage is its soul.

As the lures of earth have to be conquered, so also the lures of heaven-

All problems of existence are-essentially problems of harmony.

After all the best way to make Humanity progress is to move on oneself.

It is out of the inner victory that there comes the outer conquest.

It is not what others think of you that matters, but what you are yourself.

The greatest force is born out of the greatest difficulty.

If we stumble it is to learn in the end the secret of a more perfect walking.

One has to be more persistent than the difficulty—there is no other way.

There is no greater pride and glory than to be a perfect instrument of the Divine.

It is the darkest night that prepares the greatest dawn.

We do not belong to the past dawns but to the noons of the future.

God lives and moves and acts in us when we live and move and act in Him.

2. Words of the Mother

Let this be our one need in life, to realise the Divine.

Without the Divine life is a painful illusion, with the Divine all is bliss.

Turn to the Divine, all your difficulties will disappear.

The whole creation speaks of the Divine to him who knows how to listen in the heart.

The whole of our life should be a prayer offered to the Divine.

Let us offer our will to the Grace; it is the Grace that accomplishes all.

Always joyfully accept what is given you by the Divine,

To be concerned for one's own happiness is the surest way of becoming unhappy.

The happiness you give makes you more happy than the happiness you receive.

When you are truly changed, everything around you will also be changed.

Be grateful for all ordeals, they are the shortest way to the Divine.

There is no better way to show one's gratefulness to the Divine than to be quietly happy.

The body should reject illness as energetically as in the mind we reject falsehood.

Peace and stillness are the great remedy for diseases. When we can bring peace in our cells we are cured.

Each victory we gain over the obscure physical nature is the promise of a greater ong to come.

Good will for all and good will from all is the basis of peace and harmony.

Money is not meant to make money, money is meant to make the earth ready for the advent of the new creation.

The only hope for the future is a change of man's consciousness and the change is bound to come,

GLOSSARY

Adhara....Vessel, receptacle, the containing system of mind, life and body.

Ananda...spiritual delight, the bliss of the spirit.

Bhakta....devotee, a lover of God; hence bhakti, devotion. Brahman....the spiritual Reality, universal and supreme;

the Absolute. Chakra....centre; the seven psychological centres in the

subtle body.

Chit...essential consciousness of the spirit.

Gita....short form of Bhagvad Gita, a Hindu Scripture.

Gunas....the three qualitative modes, essential properties or fundamental forces of Prakriti called swatta, rajas and tamas.

Guru....the Master, spiritual preceptor.

Krishna....Incarnation of the Supreme Divine who tauglet the Bhagvad Gita.

Laya...merging in the one infinite Self-existence.

Lila...play (of the Divine), the cosmic play.

Mantra....a holy name or a formula of words which one repeats reverently to win an object of desire.

Maya...illusion, unreality.

Mukti....spiritual liberation, release from cosmic existence. Nirvana...spiritual extinction of separate individual self. Prakriti ...Nature, the active and executive Energy as distinguished from Purusha.

Prana....life, vital force; hence pranic, concerning the life principle.

Purusha....the soul or conscious being supporting the action of Nature.

Rajasic....full of the quality of rajas, the kinetic principle in Nature denoted by desire, action and passion.

Sadhaka...disciple, seeker; one who practises yoga.

Sadhana....practice of yoga; a spiritual discipline by which perfection or siddhi is obtained.

Samata....equability, otherwise called equality; unmoved quietude of mind and vital.

Swattic....full of the quality of sattwa, the principle, the power, the qualitative mode of light and calm and joy in Nature.

Shakti... the Divine Power, the Consciousness-Force of the Divine; the Divine Nother.

Siddha....one perfect in the Yoga.

Siddhi....realisation, fulfilment; also, an occult power gained by Yoga.

Tamasic....full of the quality of tamas, the principle, the power, the qualitative mode of obscurity and inertia in Nature.

Tantric....pertaining to the Tantra, a special yogic system.

Tapasya....spiritual effort; spiritual austerity. Upanishad....the 'Book of Knowledge' that forms the latter part of the Vedas.

Yogin, yogi....one who practises the Yoga. One can be called a Yogi. when one has constant union with the Divine on any plane of consciousness—mental, vital, physical, spiritual or supramental.

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